

The
RAPIDS
ALAN SULLIVAN



THE RAPIDS

THE RAPIDS

BY

ALAN SULLIVAN

AUTHOR OF "THE INNER DOOR," ETC.

COPP CLARK CO., LIMITED
TORONTO
1920

127148

PS8537

U4R3

SULLIVAN, A.

COPYRIGHT, 1920, BY
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. CLARK DISCOVERS ARCADIA	1
II. ARCADIA WAKES UP	20
III. PHILADELPHIA HEARS ABOUT ARCADIA	35
IV. PRELIMINARIES IN ST. MARYS	41
V. THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA	55
VI. CONCERNING IRON, WOOD AND A GIRL	66
VII. THE BISHOP'S GARDEN PARTY — AND AFTERWARDS	78
VIII. IRON	97
IX. CONCERNING THE APPREHENSION OF CLARK'S DIRECTORS	101
X. CUPIDITY <i>vs.</i> LOYALTY	112
XI. CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION, ALSO HIS DIRECTORS	121
XII. LOVE AND DOUBT	149
XIII. THE VOICE OF THE RAPIDS	162
XIV. AN ANCIENT ARISTOCRAT VISITS THE WORKS	178
XV. CLARK CONVERTS TORONTO	183
XVI. GOLD, ALSO CONCERNING A GIRL	198
XVII. THE GIRL IN THE CANOE	213
XVIII. MATTERS FINANCIAL	220
XIX. THE WEB OF LACHESIS	240
XX. THE CAR OF PROGRESS HATS	251
XXI. THE CRASH	268
XXII. THE MASTER MIND AT WORK	289
XXIII. CONCERNING THE RIOT	300
XXIV. DESTINY	318
XXV. THE UNCONQUERABLE SPIRIT	331
EPILOGUE	335



THE RAPIDS

I.—CLARK DISCOVERS ARCADIA

AMONGST the few who knew Robert Fisher Clark at all well, for there were not many of them, there was no question as to his beliefs. It was too obvious that his primary faith was in himself. Nor is it known whether, at any time, he gave any thought or study to the character of those with whom, in the course of his remarkably active life, he came into association. Always it appeared that there was laid upon him the responsibility of doing things which did not occur to the ordinary man, and he went about them with such supreme confidence and unremitting enthusiasm that he infused into his followers much of his communicable zeal. It appears now that Clark weighed a man by appraising the degree to which he contributed to the work in hand, and automatically set aside those whom he considered contributed nothing to his object. He was the most unattached personality it is possible to imagine. Whatever passion or reaction he may have experienced was always a matter for him alone, and something that he underwent in the remoteness of an astonishingly exclusive brain. That he experienced them is without doubt, but they were revealed in the intensity of action and the quick resiliency of renewed effort.

THE RAPIDS

It was not known, either, whether he believed in chance, or in those tiny eventualities which so often impress a definite color on subsequent years. The trend of his mind was to move forward rather than back, and it is questionable if he gave much thought to second causes. The fruit dangled before his eye even as he planted the vine, and if this induced in him a certain ruthlessness it could only be because those who are caught up in high endeavor to reach the mountain tops must perforce trample many a lowland flower beneath their eager feet.

And yet it was chance that brought Clark to St. Marys, chance that he should be in a certain train at a given time, and above all it was chance that he should overhear a certain conversation, but it was not by any means chance that he should interpret the latter as he did.

The train was lurching over an uneven track that wound through the woods of western Ontario when, staring thoughtfully out of the window at the tangled bush, he caught from across the aisle the drift of talk that was going on between two strangers.

"And so," said one of them, "the thing went smash for lack of just two things."

"And what were they?"

"Some more money and a good deal more experience."

Clark raised his head ever so slightly. Money and experience — the lack of them had, to his personal knowledge, worked disaster in a wider circle than that of St. Marys. He had heard of the place before, but

CLARK DISCOVERS ARCADIA

that was years ago. Presently one of the strangers continued.

"It was after the railway came that the people in St. Marys seemed to wake up. They got in touch with the outside world and began to talk about water power. You see, they had been staring at the rapids for years, but what was the value of power if there was no use to which to put it? Then a contractor dropped in who had horses and tools but no job."

"So that's what started it?"

"Exactly. The idea was small enough to begin with and the town just wanted power for light and water works, so they gave the contractor the job, borrowed a hundred and thirty thousand dollars, and got the necessary land from the Ottawa government. I've an idea that if those rights ever get into experienced hands you'll hear a good deal more of St. Marys than you ever heard before."

"And then?"

"The town went broke on the job. Mind you, they had a corking agreement with the government and a block of land alongside the rapids big enough for a young city. The mistake was they hadn't secured any factory. Also they needed about five times as much money."

The other man smiled reflectively. "The old story over again."

"That's about it. Credit ran out and the work stopped and things began to rust, and now St. Marys has gone to sleep again and does a little farming and trade with the Indians."

THE RAPIDS

"In fact, it's a sort of rural tragedy?"

"Yes. You'll see the half-finished ditch just before we cross the bridge. I'm afraid St. Marys has that kind of a sick feeling that generally knocks the stuffing out of a municipality. Come on, let's have some lunch."

The two disappeared toward the dining car, but Clark did not stir. His eyes, which were gray and keen, still fixed themselves contemplatively on the ragged wilderness. His lips were pressed tight, his jaw slightly thrust out. Water rights — industries — unlimited power — land for an industrial city; all this and much more seemed to hurl itself through his brain. Presently he took a railway folder out of his bag and examined one of those maps which invariably indicate that the railway which has published the folder owns the only direct route between important points and that all other lines meander aimlessly in comparison. He noted, although he already knew it, that St. Marys, Ontario, was just across the river from St. Marys, Michigan; that Lake Superior flung itself down the rapids that roared between, and that to the south the country was fairly well settled — but to the north the wilderness stretched almost unbroken to the sub-arctics.

A quarter of an hour passed when a long whistle announced the approach to the town. At the sound a new light came into the gray eyes, the traveler closed his bag with a snap and began to put on his coat. Just at that moment the porter hurried up.

"This isn't Minneapolis, sir."

CLARK DISCOVERS ARCADIA

Clark drew a long breath. "I know it — have changed my mind. I'm for St. Mary's now."

He stepped off almost before the train came to a halt and looked curiously about.

"Good day," he said to the nearest man. "Will you please tell me who is mayor and where I will find him?"

Now it happened that the individual to whom this query was addressed was none other than Bowers, the town solicitor, for Bowers had a habit of deserting his office about train time and surveying new arrivals from a corner of the platform with the lurking hope of unearthing something which might relieve the monotony of days which were not only wearisome but unprofitable. When the stranger spoke to him, the lawyer noticed that he was of medium height with a strong barrel-like body and rather sloping shoulders. His face was smooth, his jaw somewhat heavy, his eyes exceedingly keen, and he carried with him an indefinable air of authority. He observed, also, that the voice had in it something peculiarly clear and incisive. With a little thrill and a sudden flicker of the flame of hope, he pointed down the street that led to the river.

"Filmer is the mayor and his store is at the second corner down. His office is just behind."

The stranger nodded and strode briskly off. Presently Bowers heard another voice.

"Who's that, do you suppose, commercial?"

The lawyer wrinkled his brows. "In a way, yes, but in another way, no. That fellow isn't selling anything, he's a buyer."

THE RAPIDS

As the stranger approached Filmer's store, he noted that it was the largest building in sight, as well it might be. It was the local emporium, and so successfully had Filmer managed his business that the Hudson Bay Company saw nothing inviting in competition. From a plow to a needle, from an ax to a kettle, from ammunition to sugar, Filmer had all things, and what he had not he secured with surprising promptness. He had been mayor so long that his first term was now almost forgotten. By ability, courage, and fairness he was easily the leader in the community. Broad and strong, with a ruddy, good natured face, a fine tenor voice, a keen sense of humor and repartee, he was universally popular. No one had known Filmer to complain or repine, though there must have been moments when he longed for touch with those of his own caliber. His was the case of a big man who though bigger than his surroundings accepted them cheerfully. Thus, when Filmer looked up and saw the stranger standing at his office door he was conscious of a curious feeling of anticipation.

It was noted in the store that when the murmur of voices, a mingling of the stranger's penetrating tones and Filmer's fuller, richer note, had lasted for a moment, the mayor got up and banged the door shut, after which there drifted out only a suggestion of conversation. It was not until an hour later that the door opened and the two came slowly out, the stranger as brisk as ever. Filmer was pulling thoughtfully at his glossy black whiskers. Both paused on the wide front step.

"Then at eight this evening, Mr. Clark?" said Filmer.

CLARK DISCOVERS ARCADIA

"At eight," answered the stranger, staring keenly at the river.

"Won't you come and stay with me while you are here, it's just as comfortable as the hotel?" Filmer laughed softly.

Clark shook his head. "Thanks, I'll have too much to do while I am here. I'd better be alone." And with that he set off walking smartly up the long rambling street that led to the abandoned power canal.

He progressed steadily with quick energetic steps, an alert and suggestive figure amidst a scene of placidity. Up the uneven plank walk he went, noting with a swift, sidelong glance the neat white house of Dibbott, the Indian agent, a house that thrust its snowy, wooden walls and luxuriant little garden close up to the street. On his left, still further west, was the home of Worden, the local magistrate. This was a comfortable old place by the river, with a neglected field between it and the highway. Scattered here and there were stores, small buildings with high, wooden fronts, in the upper part of which lived the proprietor and his family. On the right, street after street started intermittently northward and died, houseless, at the railway line, beyond which lay the unbroken bush. Still further up was the County jail, set four square in a large lot that had been shorn of trees. It was of gray stone, massive and forbidding and iron barred. Clark stopped here for a moment and looked back at St. Marys with its flaming maples and its scattered roofs from which rose plumes of light, gray smoke. His eyes half closed as though in some sudden introspec-

THE RAPIDS

tion, till, turning abruptly, he struck off over a road that led across a mile of level land and came presently to the grave of the industrial hopes of the town. It was an ugly scar in the face of the helpless earth.

Climbing the half completed embankment, he looked west, where through the clearing he could see the waters of Superior, then down stream to the tail of the rapids that roared half a mile further on. It came to him that nothing is so ugly as a well meant effort which has been left unfinished. Where he stood there had, a year or so before, been little rivulets which, escaping from the mighty flood of the rapids, lost themselves in thickets of birch, hemlock, and cedar, and tinkled and leaped musically to the lower stretches of the river, whilst great trout lay winnowing their currents of white water. But of this beauty there was now but a disordered gash, a hundred feet wide and a thousand feet long, where rusting tools were scattered amongst mounds of splintered rock that lay in piles just as the blast of dynamite had left them. An untidy ruin, thought Clark, who had his own ideas of how things should be put away.

But he was, nevertheless, intensely interested, scanning it all shrewdly. He picked up fragments of stone, and, breaking them, examined their texture with the utmost care. Once or twice he walked along the top of the unfinished embankment throughout its entire length, running a keen eye over the outlines of the excavation. After half an hour which concluded with one long concentrated stare, he pushed on deliberately through the soaked and tangled undergrowth till he

CLARK DISCOVERS ARCADIA

came to the edge of the rapids themselves. Here he sat on a rock and looked long and earnestly, and so motionless was he that, after a little while, he seemed to blend completely with earth, sky, and water.

Immediately at his feet the rush of the river grasped at the rough shore as though to pluck it into the deeps, and here were eddies in which he could see the polished stones at the bottom. But further out, where the full weight of water began to be felt, were the first of the great, white horses that stretched to the other shore, a tossing, leaping, irresistible herd. Under the great bridge at his right, the river took its first dip, a smooth and shining slope, streaked with tiny furrows of speed that wrinkled like waving metallic lines. Below that came the rapids in their first fury, with scattered cellars into which the flood swept to uprear itself in a second into pyramids of force and foam. This seemed to fascinate Clark, and he peered with unwinking eyes till a sharp clatter just over his head caused him to look up. Still he did not move his body, and a kingfisher on a branch, after regarding him for an instant with bright suspicious eyes, flung himself into the air and hovered over a nearby eddy with an irregular flapping of quick, blue wings. Then, like a bullet, he dived into the flashing stream immediately at Clark's feet, and emerged with diamond drops flying from his brilliant plumage and a small, silver fish curving in his sharp, serrated beak, till, a second later, he darted into the covert with his prey. The bird had dared the rapids and found that which he sought. Clark's gray eyes had seen it all, and he smiled understandingly.

THE RAPIDS

The mayor, after the departure of his visitor, stood thoughtfully in front of the store, while his eye followed the stranger's figure dreamily up the street, and stood like one who has that whereof to ponder. It is true that he had offered to accompany the new comer on his pilgrimage, but equally true that Clark had politely but definitely declined, and it was something new for the mayor to have his suggestion thus put aside. In this case, however, he felt no resentment, and presently strolled to the house of Worden, the magistrate, where he found Worden, a large man with a small, kindly face, sitting in his study which immediately faced the lawn. On the other side was the river. Worden was apparently dividing his time between an unfinished judgment, for which there seemed no pressing demand, and a satisfying contemplation of the great stream which here was flecked with foam from the tumult above.

The mayor sat for some time talking to him, surrounded by tiers of homemade shelves packed with law books, along whose tattered, leather backs Worden had a habit of running a tobacco-stained forefinger while he relighted a pipe which seemed in continual need of attention. The talk was long and earnest. The mayor's cigar went out with a smell of varnish where it lay on the edge of the judge's desk, but the two were so interested that they did not notice it.

Presently Filmer got up and Worden followed him to the porch expressing entire approval of all that had been discussed, and, as Filmer struck across to the

CLARK DISCOVERS ARCADIA

street, he returned to his study and gazed at the judgment with apparent contempt.

From Worden's, the mayor walked across to the jail and sought out Manson. The latter was in his small office which seemed crowded with its single occupant's bulk, and adjoined the high forbidding walls of the jail itself. In St. Marys the chief constable was a man of place, and the jail an edifice that at times took on a singular interest, and if such a capacious establishment as it actually was might seem superfluous in Arcadia it must be remembered that in seasons of the year the lumberjacks rolled in from the northern parts with six months' wages and a great thirst that demanded to be quenched, and a perfectly natural and well meaning desire to offer combat at sight, which they generally did. Then, too, there were fugitives from justice who slipped across the river by night in canoes, and miners from the silver country far to the west, and sometimes crime was also the product of isolation.

Manson, a tall man, broad, dark, and heavy voiced, seemed by nature designed to meet just such contingencies. Outwardly he was the epitome of authority and inwardly he had a mind as stiff as his back. In his own domain he was as Jove on Olympus, and when he moved abroad he was a perambulating reminder of the strong arm of the law. The jail was conveniently arranged to hold the court room on an upper story, so that Manson could pop a prisoner up out of his cell to be tried and sentenced, and pop him back forthwith, and all the time the unfortunate was,

THE RAPIDS

so to speak, one of the family and continually under the paternal eye.

Had a listener been outside the door, he would have gleaned that the mayor's visit was, in this case, not as amicable as that just made to Worden. He talked long and arduously, but every now and then Manson's deep bass boomed out heavy with argument, and his massive fist crashed ponderously on the table. Presently Filmer drew a long breath and, stepping out on the trim gravel path, glanced up quizzically at the chief constable who looked as though enthroned on his own doorstep.

"Mr. Mayor," came the deep voice, "I don't take any stock in your scheme. It's no good and there's a nigger in the fence somewhere. I was right before, and I am right this time."

Filmer laughed softly. "Well, John, you're a hell of a good jailer, we all admit that, but I don't put you down as any permanent prophet. However, you will come, won't you?"

Manson nodded, a nod which said that though he would come it could not affect his fixed opinion, whereupon the mayor laughed again, and set off to finish his afternoon pilgrimage, and it is but fair to follow him a little further since he was a shrewd man, active and courageous, and though he did not know it, the result of the various visits he made that day was to be imprinted indelibly on the history of St. Marys.

Banishing Manson from a mind which was already busy with his next move, he retraced his steps as far as the cottage of Dobbott, the Indian agent, who

CLARK DISCOVERS ARCADIA

at this hour of the day, might have been found moving mountainously in his long garden and pottering amongst his perennials, smoking an enormous pipe which he regretfully laid aside only in order that he might eat.

Now, since the citizens of St. Marys were, without their knowledge, about to enter upon a period of great importance, glance at Dibbott, not the least of them, as his small, blue eyes caught the approaching figure of the mayor. Six feet when he straightened, his shoulders were bent, but still broad and strong. His face was fiery, not only from his full blooded habit but also from long canoe voyages. He was a placid man — placid yet at times suddenly choleric, and he regarded St. Marys and his own particular plot of land with an undying and tranquil affection. Dibbott's position was, in a sense, enviable, for he stood as administrator between the government and the local Indian tribes, in whose eyes he was the representative of authority.

Year after year he made official visits of visible grandeur to the settlements of his wards, journeying in a great canoe in the middle of which he rested enthroned, the brim of his hat pulled far down over a scarlet, sunburnt nose, a steady wisp of smoke from his big pipe floating back into the face of the laboring Indian behind him. It may be that it was in the silence and mysterious appeal of these journeys that Dibbott got the dignity which sat so naturally on his great, gray head.

The mayor liked the old man, and Dibbott knew it, so they talked amicably while Dibbott, turning every

THE RAPIDS

now and then in surprise, pushed out his full red lips as though rising to a fly, and darted quick, little glances as Filmer unfolded his story beside a late phlox. And when the mayor concluded, Dibbott did not move but began to rumble in a deep, throaty, ruminative voice something that sounded like one hundred and thirty thousand dollars at six per cent.

On his way back to the office, Filmer saw Bowers' lean figure across the street. He crooked a masterful finger. "Come here!"

The lawyer came over very deliberately and the two went on together.

"There is a man up at the rapids who says he's ready at any time to take over the town canal debentures."

Bowers looked up startled. "Will you please repeat that very slowly."

"It's true," chuckled Filmer, "and I am calling a town meeting for to-night. I haven't time to give you the details now, but be on hand at eight o'clock. He's made a perfectly straight proposal and I don't see how we can lose on it. I never met a man just like him."

"Did he come in on the train this afternoon?"

The mayor nodded. "Yes — said he was going on to Minneapolis, but decided to stop over and make this offer."

"Then I saw him at the station," answered Bowers thoughtfully. "I thought he was a buyer. Do you reckon we can rope him in?"

Filmer drew a long breath. "Looks to me as if he

CLARK DISCOVERS ARCADIA

would rope himself in the way he is going. He won't need any help from us."

"What did you make of him personally?"

"I didn't get very far," said Filmer deliberately, "except that he struck me as the sort of man who gets things done. Look here, I've seen Dibbott and Worden and Manson. Will you go and see the Bishop and ask him to come to-night?"

"The Bishop went away this morning."

"Damn!" said the mayor explosively. "I wanted to get his opinion about Clark, that's his name, Robert Fisher Clark. Well, so long."

He went on to his store where he was overtaken by Clark who had tramped back from the rapids. The visitor was muddy and no longer immaculate and there was a trace of fatigue on his face, but he looked as cheerful and determined as ever. At that moment the village crier passed up the street swinging a raucous bell and announcing in stentorian tones that a meeting would be held in the town hall that night at eight o'clock to consider matters of prime importance to the citizens at large. The crier tramped on, and Filmer glanced up inquiringly.

"Won't you change your mind and come to the house with me? It is a safe bet you'll be more comfortable."

Clark shook his head. "Thanks, but I've got to speak in two hours and there's a good deal to think of."

Meantime rumors of many things had begun to spread through St. Marys. The magistrate, as soon as the mayor left him, naturally told Mrs. Worden

THE RAPIDS

all about it and Bowers would not have dreamt of keeping such a thing from his wife, so had stuck a card on his office door saying he would be back in ten minutes and went home for the afternoon, after which Mrs. Worden and Mrs. Bowers strolled over to see Mrs. Dibbott and were in close conversation amongst the perennials, appealing now and then to Dibbott in order that there might be no mistake about it. Down in Blood's barber shop, Jim Blood had, as might be expected, the most detailed information, for Clark had gone in there on his way to the hotel and, sitting down, remarked "shave please" and at the end, without another word, gave Jim fifty cents and walked out. And if you add to all this the sound of the crier's bell mellowing softly up the long street, it will be understood that the excitement was considerably intensified. Even Filmer, as he ate supper, did not say much, but kept his gaze on the lid of the teapot as though it were a Pandora's box in which bubbled marvelous things that might be vomited any moment. But at heart Filmer was not anxious. It was not his habit. Of all men he knew best the folk of St. Marys, so he doubted not at all, and as a matter of fact St. Marys had for mayor a much bigger and wiser man than it ever suspected.

There may be communities now such as St. Marys was twenty-five years ago, but one goes far to find them. Electricity has altered their distinctive character. The traffic of half a continent glided majestically past these wooded shores, with the deep blast of whistles as the great vessels edged gingerly into the

CLARK DISCOVERS ARCADIA

Government lock across the river to be lifted to Superior, and another farewell blast as they pushed slowly out, and lastly a trail of vanishing black smoke as they dwindled westward to the inland sea. For seven months this procession passed the town but never halted, till the people of St. Marys felt like the farmer who, in mid field, waves a friendly hand to a speeding train.

As a result folk knew each other to a degree which some would call insufferably well, and yet they did not weary. It was a curious condition in which life had few secrets and yet an ample privacy. There was, as it happened, little to secrete, and simultaneously there was no straining of hospitality. In these close quarters each was aware that the others knew what he or she could reasonably do, and, in natural consequence, did it with grace and simple ease. For years before the railway pushed up from Sudbury, the outer world was brought into touch when the bows of the bi-weekly steamer bumped softly against the big stringers of Filmer's dock, and papers and letters were thrown on a buckboard and galloped to the post office where presently the community gathered and talked.

There was no telephone to jangle, no electric light and no waterworks, but in the soil of St. Marys were springs of sweet water, and through the windows came the soft glow of lamplight as evening closed in, and the shuffle of feet on the porch announced the visitor. It was from the river and the close encircling forest that St. Marys took on its atmosphere. The maple bush was full of game, and the beaver built their curving

THE RAPIDS

dams in tamarac thickets within three miles of the village. It was a common thing to kill Sunday's dinner in a two hours stroll from Filmer's store, and, at the foot of the rapids where the Indians pushed their long canoes up to the edge of the white water, there were great, silver fish for the taking. The ducks halted for a rest on their way north and within a stone's throw of the Bishop's big, square house, the geese used to alight in a cornfield, sometimes on a Sunday morning. On such occasions the Bishop experienced keen embarrassment, for he was a good shot and a good sportsman. In springtime the Indians would come up from the settlement with mink and otter which they traded at Filmer's store for bags of brown sugar, and, these, being silently transported to the bush, would shortly reappear as quantities of genuine Indian maple sugar, which Filmer's clerks sold to Filmer's friends with absolute gravity, the nature of the thing being perfectly understood on both sides of the counter. As to local excitement, there was twice a year the County Court and, while it might be said that there was not in all this much for young people to do, they had, nevertheless, camping trips and cruises in big Mackinaw boats along the shores of Lake Huron, and snow shoeing expeditions in winter that took them straight into a fairyland where they built roaring fires of six foot logs and feasted royally in the ghostly recesses of the snow burdened woods. All this and much more had the folk of the village, and everything that went to make up a sweet, clean, uneventful life. And then into this Arcadia dropped one day a stranger, with an

CLARK DISCOVERS ARCADIA

amazing experience of the outer world, a kaleidoscopic brain, an extraordinary personal magnetism and a unique combination of driving force and superlative ambition.

Is it surprising that even though ignorant of Clark's characteristics the people of St. Marys filled the town hall that night?

II.—ARCADIA WAKES UP

IT was a large room with bare floor, painted walls and a flat sounding-board of a ceiling. Across the end was the platform, and immediately above the platform table hung a large brass lamp which could be lowered by a chain that ran along the ceiling and down the adjoining wall. Around the main walls and between the windows were smaller lamps in wire brackets, which burned with a steady, yellow light, and occasionally gave off a thin trickle of smoke that filled the room with the sharp odor of soot. On the platform sat Clark and Filmer on either side of the table, and on the table stood an enormous jug of water and one glass.

At five minutes past eight the hall was crowded. Manson was there, sitting in the front row, and leaning forward on his heavy oak stick which seemed a very bludgeon of authority. Beside him sat his wife, small, slight and gentle, the very antithesis of her dark and formidable husband. Manson's eyes roved from Filmer to Clark and back again to Filmer, but the two looked over his head and seemed no whit disconcerted. A little further back were the Dibbotts, the former turning his big gray-coated body, and every now and then surveying the growing audience with his small blue eyes, while his lips pushed in and out, which was in Dibbott a certain sign that he was thinking hard.

ARCADIA WAKES UP

Mrs. Dibbott, tall, slim, and square shouldered, turned her kindly capable face toward Clark, and felt the first intimation of that keen interest he always roused, especially in the women who met him. He seemed so alert, such a free agent and, it must be confessed, so disgracefully independent of the gentler sex. Then there was Belding, the young engineer who had had charge of the town's work at the canal. It was not Belding's fault that the money ran out, but he had ceased operations with an unshakable sense of personal blame that, of late, worked poisonously in his brain. There were also the Bowers, and Mrs. Bowers' ample and genial person was full of a pleasurable glow, for if the mayor's plan went through they would have at last a roof over the front porch on which she spent so many hospitable summer evenings. Bowers himself already saw in Clark a possible and important client, and his brain was full of half formulated propositions.

At seven minutes past eight the mayor began to speak. He had been somewhat at a loss just how he might introduce Clark, for, as a matter of fact, the only information he had about the visitor was what the visitor himself had volunteered. But here, as always, Clark's tremendous personality had expressed itself. Filmer glanced at his alert but motionless figure, and perceived that the other was a man of much greater experience and power than himself, and in this the mayor was subject to exactly that influence which Clark was in the habit of exerting without any effort whatever. So thus reinforced, and mindful as

THE RAPIDS

well that the half yearly interest and sinking fund payments would be due on the town debt in three months, he fastened an authoritative eye on Manson, the town pessimist, and commenced.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I have asked you to come here to-night because it seems that there is now an unexpected opportunity to secure great benefit for the town. You are all aware that we tried to do something and failed, and that the result was an increase of one hundred and thirty thousand dollars in the debt of St. Marys." At this point Manson rammed his oak stick against the floor with disturbing effect. The mayor glanced at him with a smile and went on. "I do not wish to put before you the proposal Mr. Clark makes to the town, he will do that himself. I can only say that I have gone into it very carefully with him, and that I am satisfied that it is more than fair to us, and that I believe he is in control of the necessary money to carry out his plans. If he does not carry them out we are no worse off, and if he does it will put St. Marys definitely on the map. He will speak for himself and I hope you will give a careful hearing, for I don't believe such men get off the train every day."

Clark was on his feet at once and began to talk in a curt, incisive tone of great penetration. Behind it there moved a suggestion of something quite new to the folk of St. Marys. The moment offered no opportunity to analyze this, but it held them motionless with attention.

"I have come," he said, "to make you a proposal

ARCADIA WAKES UP

which has already been put before Mayor Filmer, and which I am glad to tell you meets with his approval. I appreciate the opportunity, and with your coöperation great things will yet be done in St. Marys. Now I am going to ask that two windows be opened and that you listen with me for a moment."

There followed an instant of universal surprise shared by the mayor, after which Clark gathered Dawson and Belding with his magnetic eye, and the two pushed up the windows nearest them. The cool night air breathed in and set the big oil lamps flickering, but with it there came the dull monotone of the rapids. Clark leaned slightly forward, and, smiling, began to speak again.

"What you hear is a voice in the wilderness, and, ladies and gentlemen, you have heard it for years. I, too, have heard it, but for something less than eight hours, and there is a difference in our hearing and I want to make that difference clear to you. I listen with a stranger's ears, being a stranger, and therefore not accustomed to that voice, I detect in it something which possibly some of you may have recognized, but certainly none of you have fully appreciated."

There followed a little silence during which Mrs. Dibbott, her eyes twinkling with intense pleasure, nodded to Mrs. Worden. Her imagination was already at work, and, of them all, she first caught the subtle trend of Clark's address.

"It is hardly necessary for me to remind you that your town has made a certain brave attempt and failed completely in its venture." ("Hear! Hear!" from

THE RAPIDS

Manson.) "This attempt was from the outset bound to fail." At this point Manson stamped approvingly, and Clark's gray eyes rested on his big frame for a moment while the least suggestion of a smile traversed his lips. "The reason is very simple. You lacked experience in such undertakings. You partly heard the voice but only partly, for to answer it full and successfully you must answer it in millions and not in thousands of dollars."

At this point he paused impressively, while there spread through the audience the dun colored reflection that the entire town, if obliterated, could be rebuilt for much less than a million, and so definite was the reaction that the speaker proceeded to intensify it in his next remarks.

"You have at present, as the result of this ill-fated enterprise, a liability of one hundred and thirty thousand dollars—I think it is." He turned inquiringly to Filmer who nodded, and with him the entire male section of the audience. There was no question about those figures.

"This liability imposes a heavy tax upon an unproductive community, although if you were producers it would be a bagatelle. As against this liability you have, as assets, a certain piece of property and certain water rights secured from the Dominion government, rights which though at present very limited, might be made the basis of further expansion. And that is all you have—a debt, and against it something that is of no use to you."

A chilled surprise trickled through the town hall and

ARCADIA WAKES UP

Filmer himself, who had been quite unaware how Clark would state his case, began to think that the thing had gone far enough, when the penetrating voice went on.

"Now as to the town itself. I have failed, after a careful survey, to find any evidence of growth. I have seen no new buildings, nor, under the conditions which at present exist and which there is nothing you can do to change, do I see any reason for growth. You do not manufacture or import anything. You have, so to speak, to live on each other, so why should any one come here to settle down?"

Although Clark had said several striking things, there had not been anything which went as straight home as this. All had watched the great procession which passed up and down the river, and wondered why the population of St. Marys remained so stationary, but never had the inescapable truth been thrown so blatantly in their faces as by this magnetic stranger whose clear voice announced those truths which each had been secreting in his heart year after year. They began to wonder why a man of his type should be interested in the town. But the fact that he was interested clothed him with a still more compelling attraction. Visions of a decaying and moss covered settlement were floating through their minds when the voice took on a new note.

"The condition I have touched on is due to lack of three things,—experience, money and imagination, and in such isolated points as this there is little opportunity to acquire any of the three. There is in the rapids unlimited power. It must be developed, and developed

THE RAPIDS

on this side of the river. The age of electricity has come. But let us ask ourselves what is the use of power unless there is some practical purpose to which to put it. There is but one answer. Large works — enormous works must be established at the rapids; works that will utilize all the power that is developed, and draw their raw material from the surrounding country. I have an idea that you may consider the district to the north and west a wilderness, but, gentlemen, you are mistaken. I firmly believe it to be a veritable reservoir of wealth."

Here Clark stopped, glanced thoughtfully at Filmer, and poured out a glass of water, while the entire audience took an imaginary journey into the bush to the north in an attempt to discover the reservoir of wealth. This resulted in numerous quiet smiles, each of which died out with a look at the intense earnestness on the speaker's face. There was a certain amount of fur, it was admitted, but the trapping was falling off. There were scattered patches of spruce for pulp wood, but so far as most of them knew the land was poor and rocky and there had been no discovery of valuable mineral. However, silently concluded Clark's hearers, the man might know, and probably did know a good deal more than he said, and just as this opinion was gaining ground, the speaker struck an inspiring note and came to his point.

"Now for my proposal. I believe in the future of this country, in its latent wealth and its possibilities, and I am prepared to take on the town's uncompleted enterprise and assume its one hundred and thirty t^l "1-

ARCADIA WAKES UP

sand dollars of liability. Gentlemen, what I have in mind goes further than any of you have ever imagined, and it needs more millions than you have conceived. Millions will be forthcoming. In the financial markets of the world, capital must be assured of certain fundamentals. These fundamentals established, there is no difficulty whatever in securing as much money as may be required. That is my experience, and if you accept my proposition St. Marys will, within a year, begin to feel the influx of money which is seeking investment. Within that year you will hardly be able to recognize your town. Your property, your houses, your farm products will greatly increase in value, and local trade will experience a remarkable impetus. If you ask what are these basic industries which will mean so much, I need only point out that I am assured of an ample supply of pulp wood for very large mills which I propose to erect, and there is, without doubt, iron ore in these hills of yours. This is only a part of my plan."

Again Clark paused, playing with all his power on those who had already grasped something of his vision. Ore had never been found in that part of the country, though innumerable prospectors had toiled through the hills in search of it, but now it seemed that the folk of St. Marys had cast aside their difference and unbelief, and were becoming incorporated in the speaker's high assurance. A little murmur of enthusiasm arose, to be hushed instantly.

"I only want your coöperation. I do not ask that you put in one dollar. There is ample money for the

THE RAPIDS

purpose, and I tell you frankly there is no room for yours. It is not my intention to bring in for the purposes of the work anything the town itself can supply, and the more you can organize to supply amongst yourselves, the better pleased I and my associates will be. All I hope is that you participate intelligently and profitably in that which will shortly take place. And first of all it will be my duty and pleasure to supply the town with water and light on terms to be arranged with your council. This will be the smallest and to me the least profitable of our undertakings, but I regard it as an obligation to the town. Ladies and gentlemen, a new era is dawning for St. Marys. Have I your support?"

Had he their support? There followed a moment of half dazed silence during which Filmer's blood flushed up to his temples, and Clark finished his glass of water and sat down with a swift glance of his gray eyes that seemed to take in the entire assembly. As though galvanized by an electric shock, the folk of St. Marys rose to their feet and began to cheer. The ladies' handkerchiefs were in the air, with a babel of voices both small and deep. Mrs. Dibbott, her eyes dancing, caught those of Mrs. Worden and nodded vigorously, her cheeks flushed, for to men and women alike the invigorating, magnetic appeal had gone home. Then above the clamor Manson's deep bass became gradually audible.

He was leaning forward, gazing straight out at the two on the platform and booming his utter unbelief in all he had heard. Clark, it struck him, did not know

ARCADIA WAKES UP

what he was talking about, and who was Clark anyway? Had a single man in the room ever heard of Clark before that afternoon? The town had made one blunder, and it would be wise to keep out of another.

Thus far he got when the astonishment of the audience became transformed into indignation and boiled over. Clark had not moved and indeed only smiled in an absolutely friendly way, but now there were shouts that Manson sit down. He was putting the town in an unfortunate and undesirable position. Finally, Belding and Worden dragged him expostulating into his chair, whereupon Dibbott and Bowers very earnestly, and with much applause, expressed what the meeting really felt. After which the resolution was put calling upon the town council to confirm the agreement, and without any delay whatever. And this being carried unanimously with cheering, the meeting broke up and streamed down the wooden stairs with much trampling of feet, while Mrs. Dibbott asked Mrs. Bowers if she had noticed that every one was so interested that the two windows which were opened had not been closed again in spite of the fact that three lamps had been blown out. All this time the visitor sat still, a satisfied light in his eyes, and when Dibbott and the rest asked to be introduced, the mayor exclaimed that the speaker of the evening was so occupied with momentous matters that he was obliged to postpone the pleasure of meeting them for a day or two. This, of course, added to the spell of fascination cast by the remarkable stranger.

THE RAPIDS

A day or two later, he was to disappear as sudden as he came, but in the meantime he avoided the people of St. Marys and was extremely busy. To his room at the hotel there had mounted a small procession of visitors, mostly lumbermen, who, being for a few moments admitted to the shrine of mystery, reappeared with their eyes more bright and their lips pressed tight. They had been discussing business matters, and this was for the present about all they would say. The town council, without a dissenting note, accepted Clark's proposal, and the latter became a legal debtor for one hundred and thirty thousand dollars and the owner of the abandoned works, and so simply and smoothly was the business carried out that to the council there seemed something magical and portentous in the transaction.

That afternoon Clark sent for Belding, and the young engineer came with an expectant thrill. By this time St. Marys was aware that the visitor went to no one, but every one came to him. It was typical of methods which he adopted from the very first, so that almost immediately his personality, which was entirely new to this remote community, began to suggest every phase of power and authority.

Belding had brought his plans and blue prints with him, and spread them on the small bedroom table. Followed a little silence, broken by a crisp interrogation.

"How much power have you figured on developing?"

"Five hundred horse power."

ARCADIA WAKES UP

"Capable of any expansion?" Clark's lips took on a quizzical curve.

"Yes, to one thousand."

To this there was no comment. Belding himself rather liked the sound of a thousand horsepower. It seemed well rounded.

"Your water rights, I mean my water rights," went on Clark thoughtfully, "permit the use of water for such works as I may erect."

"Yes," the engineer hesitated a moment and added, "sir."

Clark smiled almost imperceptibly, that is his face expressed an inward amusement because a number of tiny lines wrinkled into being at the corners of his gray eyes, and his lips pushed out ever so slightly. Presently he forgot all about the plans, and stared out of the window where the first leap of the rapids was just visible.

"And your technical experience, Mr. Belding, tell me about that."

Belding told him, and did his best to dilate on work that now seemed of a minor character. There was that about Clark which curiously minimized the young man's accomplishments.

Clark nodded once or twice. "Do you owe any money?"

"No, sir." Belding's voice roughened a shade.

Came one of the stranger's rare and unmistakable smiles. "Forget all about these plans and start new ones. I have no use for a thousand horsepower, or five thousand, or ten. We will begin with twenty thou-

THE RAPIDS

sand. I say begin with that. Now listen. You are appointed my chief engineer. I said last night I did not wish to import that which the town can furnish, and I mean it. But being my engineer you are mine, and no one else's. The plans you will make are for me, and me alone, as is all information connected with them, and I may tell you that my engineers carry out my plans and not theirs. Your position will be highly confidential, more important than you can at present imagine. You will be the repository of much that many people would like to know, but I will do whatever talking is necessary."

There were a few added instructions after which Belding went downstairs in a somewhat dazed condition. Then, suddenly, he remembered that no mention had been made of salary. Turning back he rapped at Clark's door.

"There is one thing we did not discuss," he said a little awkwardly.

"What's that?"

"What are you willing to give me a month. I'm apparently engaged and I'd like to know where I stand."

Clark laughed shortly. "My invariable practice is to pay every cent my employees can earn; the more I pay the better I like it. Good evening."

Later that afternoon the engineer walked thoughtfully up to the power canal. It seemed incredible that it should no longer be abandoned. Staring at this uncompleted effort, he felt infused with a hot and overwhelming loyalty. Whatever was good in him he

ARCADIA WAKES UP

would put into the work. He did not dream of the magnitude of his coming trust, but had a sensation that the curtain was about to rise on a new scene. He was, perhaps, more than the rest impressed with the visitor's force and hypnotic power which seemed prophetic and almost mystical. Then his glance, wandering down stream, caught a trace of smoke where the afternoon steamer was disappearing round a bend.

Clark had gone off by the afternoon boat, explaining to Filmer that he desired to get a glimpse of some other parts of the country. Now he sat immovably in a corner of the deck, wrapped in a thick overcoat and speaking to none. In his hand was a copy of the town agreement. He ran over it musingly till he came to the clause which set forth his new obligations, and at this point his lips tightened a little. Had he at that moment been able to realize every wordly possession he had he might have cleared up twenty-five hundred dollars but certainly not five thousand. A glint came into his eyes as he read. The agreement set forth in Bowers' best phraseology that Robert Fisher Clark of Philadelphia, financier,—and at the sound of the last word Clark smiled a little,—hereby undertook to spend in various works not less than three million dollars in the next five years, failing which his title to the town's former holdings would automatically lapse.

The vessel moved smoothly on. Reviewing the last few days with perfect placidity, he sent his mind back to other notable occasions when success had been snatched from him, it seemed, at the very last moment. The review did not depress him. He was not of that

THE RAPIDS

kind, but was filled rather with a new and inflexible determination.

The dream and the vision broadened. As the vessel swung into the long turn that leads round the first big bend, he glanced back and caught the wide white line of foam below the spidery bridge. As he gazed the wooded ground to the north of the rapids seemed to be covered with great stone buildings whose walls lifted like mystic battlements in the green wilderness. He saw railways plunging into the forest and heard the rumble of trains that drew up to his phantom factories. He saw the river and the lakes furrowed with ships that came to St. Marys with foreign cargoes and, charged full with his products, turned their slim bows to distant lands. All this and much more passed in royal procession before his thoughtful eye. Then something seemed to leap through his brain and he stood erect, masterful and undaunted.

"And now," he said to himself with a touch of grim humor, "now perhaps I'd better find some money."

III.—PHILADELPHIA HEARS ABOUT ARCADIA

FOLLOW Clark a little further, for he was making history. He did not think of this but had merely set a determined face toward his guiding star. The vision was still clear and sharp when he reached Philadelphia, reinspired by a series of swift calculations that were as swiftly stowed away for suitable use in his retentive brain. There were also three names — Wimperley, Riggs, and Stoughton.

The morning after he arrived he went to see the first of his prospects. Wimperley was the auditor of a great railway system, and when Clark's name was brought in he looked up from his desk and announced shortly: "Busy, can't see him," which was really what Clark expected.

Now the influence by which Clark forced and carried out this interview with Wimperley need not be succinctly described, nor the half amused, half resentful surrender with which Wimperley finally said, "Show him in," but it is indicative of that power of hypnosis which Clark could exert at will, and by means of which, time and time again, he dissolved antagonism into support and the murky solution of criticism into the clean precipitate of confident reassurance. Wimperley knew perfectly well that, once admitted, Clark would convert him to his own present belief, whatever that might be, and that under Clark's magnetic persuasion

THE RAPIDS

he would shortly find himself treading a totally unexpected path.

"Good morning. I'd like to have fifteen minutes." Clark was inwardly amused, but he spoke with perfect gravity.

Wimperley drew a long breath. He knew what could happen in fifteen minutes. "What's the scheme now?"

"Power and pulp," said Clark briefly, and, turning to a large railway map on the wall laid a finger on the point where Lake Superior falls into Lake Huron.

"Go ahead."

"I have acquired the right to develop any desired quantity of energy. This can be done for eighty dollars a horsepower. The country to the north is full of pulp wood, but the people up there don't know it."

Wimperley felt a throb of interest. The power question in Philadelphia was up at the moment, but it was power developed from coal and it came high.

"What else?" he said evenly, "and how do you know it?"

"Seven different lumbermen have offered to contract for ten thousand cords a year. That's all I had time to talk to. The point is that each has individual knowledge of good stands of timber in his own locality but the thing has never been collated. Now look here," went on Clark, with a new light in his gray eyes — "there's power and wood; excellent transportation; iron ore — without question — in the hills; limestone at hand; cheap labor; no local competition, and —"

PHILADELPHIA HEARS ABOUT ARCADIA

"Wait a minute," struck in Wimperley hastily and pressed a bell.

"Telephone Mr. Riggs and Mr. Stoughton and see if they can come over for a moment," he said to his secretary, then, turning to Clark, "better wait for them.

Silence fell in the office. Both men were thinking hard. Wimperley, beginning to be resigned, had, in a burst of revolt, visualized Riggs and Stoughton as those most likely to help with the barricade which Clark was already beginning to shatter, and Clark, his face as imperturbable as ever, marveled not at all at his own influence, but was busy reviewing the strategic moves which were to convert the two for whom he waited. Presently they entered, shook hands with a certain stiffness and sat down. A glance at Clark revealed the reason for Wimperley's summons. They, too, had in former years come under the spell.

"Now," said Wimperley briefly.

Clark recapitulated, and the three listened, their faces devoid of expression save when their eyes involuntarily sought each other.

The voice went on vibrant and compelling. "We can turn out seventy-five thousand tons of pulp a year at a profit of six dollars a ton. There is an abundance of hard wood for veneer mills. I have five hundred acres of land adjoining the power canal; it is crossed by the Transcontinental Railway; I have been to Ottawa and am promised a bonus of ten thousand dollars a mile for such railways as we may build. The balance of the cost will be met by the sale of lands

THE RAPIDS

thus developed, and thus the railways will not mean any permanent investment on our part, but we will, nevertheless, own them. I am also authorized to divert from the rapids any water I may require for power. I have been to see the Provincial Government and am promised exclusive control of any mineral or lumber areas applied for. The market for pulp is very good and will shortly be better owing to the exhaustion of areas which have been cut over too long. I have virgin country which is practically inexhaustible. The town has transferred to me its entire rights and holdings. I have all the fundamentals for the making of a great industrial center. As to the money —"

"Yes," put in Riggs with a suggestion of breathlessness in his voice.

"Philadelphia has millions waiting for investment — you know it, I know it, and this is the opportunity. We will be dealing with natural products in a simple and natural way. The district supplies the power and the raw material; the outside and neighboring country, the market. We supply the brains."

"What does this cost you personally?" hazarded Stoughton a little uncertainly.

"A hundred dollars in traveling expenses, and I have assumed a hundred and thirty thousand of town debentures at six per cent. If you don't want it there are others who do."

Wimperley looked up. His face had taken on a new expression. He caught Riggs' eye and his lips formed the word "cheap."

The latter nodded. There was a slight flush in his

PHILADELPHIA HEARS ABOUT ARCADIA

otherwise sallow cheeks. Then he put a series of searching questions which were answered by Clark with a wealth of detailed information which it seemed was impossible to have been collected by one man in the course of a few days. After which the three went to the big map and, turning their backs on Clark, traced out railway lines and steamship routes and the general transportation situation, and all the while the latter sat quite motionless, while his eyes regarded the group across the room with a look at once hypnotic and profound. These were telling moments, during which unseen forces seemed to move and stretch themselves in hidden potency.

Presently came Wimperley's voice. "How much money would be necessary for the first year's operations?"

"About a million, possibly more."

"And how," demanded Stoughton, "do you propose to get it?"

"I am not going to get it," replied Clark with extreme placidity; "you are."

Came a joint laugh from the three at the map, not hearty or contagious, but burdened with that negative humor with which men sometimes accept a situation which holds them helpless and at the same time summons all their power to meet it.

Stoughton drew a long breath. "Well," he said slowly; "I suppose we are."

There followed an hour's conference. Clark did not display a trace of triumph but poured out the contents of his extraordinary brain. A million to start with and

THE RAPIDS

after that more millions as the occasion demanded. These were his requirements and the rest could be left to him. And it might be noted that the prospect did not cause the others much anxiety, for as the undertaking unfolded with communicable power, they perceived more fully than ever that he was in actuality dealing with fundamentals, and fundamentals were things they were not afraid to commend to financial circles. Thus was sown in this Philadelphia office the seed which was destined to propagate itself so amazingly.

When it was all over, Clark went back to his hotel, and wrote a short letter to a woman saying that he had interesting business on hand and hoped to see her soon. The letter was to his mother.

IV.—PRELIMINARIES IN ST. MARYS

SNOW was on the ground and the river crisping with tinkling sheets of spreading ice when Clark again reached St. Marys and with characteristic energy laid his first plans. These were to supply the town with water and light, and the fact that the well remembered public promise was thus to be redeemed reassured the citizens as nothing else could have done. It was true that heavy work was impossible before spring, but Belding, on instructions, deposited with the town council an imposing set of blue prints which showed water pipes and electric circuits radiating through every part of the town.

It was a week or so later that one day in the office Belding looked up as though he had been called and caught his chief's penetrating gaze.

"Are you engaged, Belding; I mean to be married?" There was a twinkle in the gray eyes.

"No, sir."

"Want to be?"

"No, sir."

"Anything to think of except the work?"

Belding shook his head. He had already learned never to show surprise.

"Then suppose I share your quarters for the rest of the winter. I can't stand that hotel any longer."

The engineer flushed. Already he had put Clark away in the corner of his mind as one not comparable to

THE RAPIDS

any man he had ever met. His directness, his versatility, the suggestion of power that lay behind power,—all these Belding had found in him. And this was a little like being asked to share quarters with the Pope.

"I'm afraid you won't be very comfortable, sir." Belding had the use of a big house, but it was hard to heat.

"I'll be better off than where I am," said Clark, and that settled it. He had apparently conceived for the young man as much liking as he cared to show for any one. Presently he laughed.

"You're wondering why I asked whether you were going to be married."

"I am — rather."

"Well, it's only because I feel a bit superfluous to any one in that condition."

"Then you're not married yourself?" said Belding involuntarily.

Clark's eyes hardened. "No," he answered with extreme deliberation, "I am not, I am too busy." Presently his mood changed and he added provocatively, "But you're doomed, I see it in your face."

Belding smiled. "I haven't met her yet."

"It isn't a case of your meeting her; it's the other way on. You may never know it, but she will."

Belding glanced at him, puzzled. This was not the Clark he knew ten minutes ago. And just then the other man pulled himself up.

"I think I'd move that mill about a hundred feet west," he went on, bending over a drawing. "It will shorten the head race and save money."

PRELIMINARIES IN ST. MARYS

The engineer nodded and drew a long breath. He had expected to get a glimpse of the inner man, but the door was banged in his face.

That winter was, for him, an adventure in regions fascinating and remote. It is probable that at the time there was not on the North American continent a man more highly endowed than Clark with gifts of sheer psychological power. Belding, young in his world, could not recognize it as such, but he fell the more completely under the wizard-like spell of his companion's imagination. The days, shortened by late sun and long nights, passed with early journeys to the temporary office which Clark had built at the canal, where they compiled endless surveys and plans in which the scope of the future was graphically depicted. On these miniature spaces factory shouldered against factory and mill against mill. The canal doubled in size, and, stupendous as it all seemed, Belding could see no reason why these things should not shortly exist. It was vastly different from former days.

As the weeks passed, he began to get Clark in clearer perspective. It became forced on him that this hypnotic stranger had no desire except that of creation. It seemed that his supreme determination was to win from the earth that which he believed it offered, and express himself in steel and stone and concrete, in the construction of great buildings and in the impressive rumble of natural power under human control. There was talk of many things, colored by keen, incisive comments from this man of many parts, but never once did he put forward the subject of wealth or the means of its

THE RAPIDS

amassing. The possession, or at least the direction, of great sums was imperative to him, but he valued them only for what they could achieve, and Belding always got the sensation of his new approach to subjects hitherto deemed well worn, and that remarkable mixture of impatience and intuitive power which characterized his analysis. Again there were evenings when Clark did not want to talk, but slipped off to the piano. Then the engineer saw another man within the man, one who, plunged in profound meditation, sat for hours, while his strong yet delicate fingers explored the keys, interpreting the color of his mood and drawing, as it were, from some mystical source that on which the subtle brain was nourished. And these were periods which the other soon learned were not to be interrupted.

They were constantly asked out and entertained with old time hospitality, Clark being the object of supreme curiosity in St. Marys, and more often than not he slipped away early, leaving Belding on duty. It was on these occasions that the contrast between his chief and others stood out most prominently, there being nothing, it seemed, that any one could do for him. His principal desire was to be let alone.

It was one night at the Wordens' that Belding caught what he took to be evidence of a heart that was fastidiously concealed. Clark, in front of the fireplace, was listening to the judge dilate on the ancient history of St. Marys, and that of lost and silent tribes who once paddled along the shore and lifted their delicate bark canoes around the tumbling rapids. Worden was a

PRELIMINARIES IN ST. MARYS

wise, old man with a certain gentle dignity, and his wife, a dainty, middle-aged lady with slowly graying hair and kindly eyes.

"There was a good deal of bloodshed about," ruminated the judge. "Of course the Jesuit got here first and performed the mysteries of the Host in front of the natives. There were Indian wars and a good deal of torturing went on up on your property, Mr. Clark. Then the French and English traders shot each other from behind trees, where I understand you are going to build your pulp mill, and the survivors took the furs and struck off for Montreal in canoes, a matter of some six hundred miles. After that the Red River Company and the Hudson Bay got at loggerheads."

"In short," put in Clark, "I've picked out a veritable battle ground. By the way, who is this, if I may ask?" He lifted a photograph from the mantel.

Mrs. Worden smiled proudly. "Our laughter, Elsie. She's seventeen now and we won't see her for two years. She's in the West with her aunt."

"Oh!" said Clark. His brows pulled down and he scanned the print with close attention. "She has imagination I take it."

"Too much for her own comfort," remarked the judge.

Clark did not answer but dropped into one of those thoughtful silences which, while they did not seem to exclude, made it nevertheless appear presumptuous to rouse him.

"Too much imagination," he repeated presently.

THE RAPIDS

"Is that possible?" Then, after another long stare, "It's a very unusual face."

Mrs. Worden looked very happy. "We're going to take great care of Elsie when we get her back. She had this long, delightful invitation and we let her go because we thought she'd see more than she could in St. Marys, but she writes that it's even quieter."

"The old St. Marys is nearly at an end and your daughter will find food for her imagination when she gets back. May I show this to Mr. Belding?"

The young man took the photograph with a queer sense of participation in something he did not understand. He saw a broad, low forehead, masses of soft and slightly curly hair, eyes that looked beautifully and wistfully out from beneath finely arched brows and a mouth that lacked nothing in humorous suggestion. Puzzling for an instant what it was that had attracted his impersonal chief, he heard the latter saying good night with customary abruptness.

"Come along, Belding; we've got a long day ahead of us. The directors will be here to-morrow."

The judge was vastly interested. "So St. Marys is in actual touch with Philadelphia?"

"Very much so, and in about two years St. Marys will loom very large in Philadelphia. Good night and thank you."

The wind was stinging and they drove home rather silently. Arriving at the big house, Clark went to the piano and played for a moment. The music ceased as suddenly as it began and, warming himself at the great stove in the hall, Belding heard a short laugh

PRELIMINARIES IN ST. MARYS

and an exclamation. "Too much imagination," exploded Clark. The tone was one of utter incredulity. At that the young man felt curiously truculent. Elsie was only seventeen, while Clark was certainly not less than thirty-five. Then the latter reappeared, rubbing his chilled fingers.

"The piano is too stiff with cold to talk. By the way, Worden was talking about the bishop. What bishop?"

Belding told him what he knew. "He's an Irishman and a fine man. He works this part of his diocese from St. Marys in the summer. One hears all kinds of stories about him from the woods and the islands. He's got a sense of humor and is a good sportsman, but I've only met him once or twice. Just now he's over in England raising money to buy a small yacht to navigate himself when he's traveling on duty, and weather won't stop him if he gets it. You'll see him next spring."

Clark seemed interested. "I don't know many parsons but that doesn't describe them to me. A sportsman and a sense of humor, eh? It sounds like a hunting parson. I thought they were all dead."

"This one isn't."

"St. Marys begins to offer more than I expected," smiled his chief. "Are you going to L.d, or will you sit here and freeze to death?"

Riggs, Stoughton, and Wimperley came up next day. Clark met them at the station, where a bitter wind was droning down from the north, and Belding, by engineering of a high order, made room for them at his

THE RAPIDS

quarters. Then they drove out to the canal, and with Clark climbed the icy embankment while the latter expounded the situation.

"There," he said cheerfully, "will be the first power house, and there mill number one."

Riggs, a small thin-blooded man, peered at the glassy landscape. "Splendid," he chattered, while Stoughton pulled his fur collar over his ears and set his back to the wind.

"Up at the north end,—you can see it better if you step a little this way—will be the head gates. That railway trestle—you see that trestle don't you, Wimperley? —"

Wimperley pulled himself together, but his feet had lost all feeling. "Yes, any one could see that."

"Well, that will be replaced by a steel bridge at the railway's expense. We propose to widen the canal at that point to one hundred feet at the bottom, and now —" here he seized the unfortunate Stoughton and swung him so that he faced into the chilling blast — "I want to point out the booming ground for logs."

Stoughton muttered something that sounded like strong condemnation of all logs, but Clark did not seem to hear him.

"They'll come round that point, swing into the bay and feed down this way to the mill. You get that, don't you?"

They all got it, at least so they earnestly assured the speaker who stood with his overcoat half unbuttoned, his cap on the back of his head and apparently oblivious of the temperature. This frigid and desolate

PRELIMINARIES IN ST. MARYS

scene had no terrors for him. Beneath the icy skin he discovered its promise.

"There'll be two booms — one for pulp wood and the other for hard wood for the veneer mills. You make hard wood float by driving plugs of lighter wood into both ends of the log. And now, if you'll step down this way, I'll show you where the dredges will start work."

"Look here," said Riggs in a quavering voice, "what's the matter with my cheek? I can't feel it."

Clark glanced at him and shook with sudden laughter. "Only a bit of frost bite,— perhaps we'd better go back to the office. It's a pity, though,"— here he hesitated a little — "there's quite a lot more to see."

Whereupon Riggs and the other two at once assured him that unless they sought shelter forthwith they would flatly refuse to authorize the expenditure of any more money whatever in a country as blasted as this. After which they repaired to the office, where Belding waited with his blue prints and Clark outlined the possible future. As he put it, these developments were only possible and depended on what that future might bring forth. But as he talked, Belding, for one, knew that the whole magnificent program had been definitely determined in that astonishing brain.

They drove back in the open sleigh and the horses, chilled in the cold, sent the snow flying about their ears. There was but little talk and it was not until they drew abreast of a stone building that Stoughton spoke.

"Nice jail you've got here," he remarked with a

THE RAPIDS

grin. "Looks as if they had been expecting our crowd."

Clark laughed. "It's the home of the only pessimist I have found in St. Marys."

"Then let's drop in and convert him." Stoughton was feeling warmer, and the keen, dry air and brilliant sun affected him like wine.

There was an instantaneous shout of approval, and three school boys in the shape of the three most influential men of Philadelphia rolled happily out of the sleigh. Riggs turned with mischief in his eye and a bright red patch on his cheek.

"Come on, Clark; we need something like this after the dose you have given us."

At the trampling of feet, Manson looked out of the window, then stepped deliberately to the door. The next minute Clark was busy introducing. "Mr. Manson, this is Mr. Wimperley, auditor of the Columbian Railway Company; Mr. Riggs, president of the Philadelphia Bank, and Mr. Stoughton, of the American Iron Works. We're all cold and cast ourselves on your mercy. They've had enough power canal for to-day."

Manson waved them in with just the gesture with which he motioned a prisoner into the dock. It was the only gesture he knew. His brain was working with unwonted rapidity, and he glanced questioningly at Clark, but the face of the latter was impassive. The visitors grouped themselves round the big box stove that was stuffed with blazing hardwood.

"Lived here long, Mr. Manson?" hazarded Riggs, stretching his thin fingers to the heat.

PRELIMINARIES IN ST. MARYS

"All my life, gentlemen, and I don't want anything else."

"You haven't been in jail for that time?" put in the irrepressible Stoughton.

The big man relaxed to a smile. "I've been in charge here for the last twenty-five years, and I like it."

The three glanced at him with a sudden and genuine interest. The man was so massive; his hair so black, and, at the age of fifty, still unstreaked with gray. His face was large and strong, with a certain Jovian quality in cheek, ear, and chin. He suggested latent physical powers that, if aroused, would be tremendous.

"Find it pretty quiet?" went on Stoughton.

"Yes, but that's what I like."

"Then you don't entirely approve of our plans up at the rapids? At least, so Mr. Clark tells me."

Manson's glance lifted and went straight into Clark's gray eyes.

"No, I don't believe in them, if," he added, "I can say so without offense."

Riggs stripped off his heavy fur coat, and turned his back to the stove.

"Just why, may I ask?"

"Well, I have a feeling you'll spoil St. Marys. It's just right as it is. We haven't much excitement and I reckon we don't want it. We're comfortable, so why can't you let us alone? I like the life as it is."

"You'll live faster after we get going," chuckled Wimperley.

"Perhaps, but we won't live so long. I've had a

THE RAPIDS

lot of men through my hands who tried to live faster, and it didn't agree with them — not that I'm meaning —" The rest was lost in a riot of laughter, out of which Wimperley's voice became audible.

"If things go as we propose and expect, the people of St. Marys will profit very considerably,— there will be remarkable opportunities."

"Meaning that,—" a new light flickered in Manson's black eyes for a fraction of a second and disappeared.

"Meaning that during the transformation of a village into a city a number of interesting changes take place."

"Maybe, but such things can't affect me very much."

"Well, possibly not, but I've an idea they will. I'm afraid we can't let St. Marys alone, Mr. Manson, and a little later on you'll understand why. This land, for instance, between us and the river, is vacant."

Manson's eye slowly traversed the two hundred yard width of the open field that lay just south of the road. It was perhaps half way between the rapids and the center of the village.

"Yes, I think Worden owns it, but I know that no one wants it."

"Ah!" said Stoughton with a little laugh; "and now we must be getting on. Good-by, and thank you for saving our lives, even if you have had a crack at our project."

There was a sound of laughing voices on the porch and a jangle of sleigh bells that dwindled toward the village, but Manson did not seem to hear them. He stood blocking up the window, his hands thrust deep

PRELIMINARIES IN ST. MARYS

in his pockets, staring at the vacant lot across the street.

Dinner that night cost Belding much searching of soul. "There'll be three more," Clark had said, and forgotten all about it, but when the Philadelphians sat down Belding's heart sank. On the table was a leg of mutton, placed hastily by an agitated servant lest it freeze between kitchen and dining room. Even while Belding carved it the gravy began to stiffen. Behind Clark was a glowing fireplace, ineffectual against the outside temperature, the windows were white with frost and the whole house seemed to creak.

"Have some mutton," said the young man desperately.

Riggs rubbed his thin hands. "Thanks, I'm very fond of mutton. Do you mind if I put on my overcoat? The floor seems a little cold." He disappeared and returned muffled to the ears.

"You'd better hurry up with your food," said Clark soberly. "The human stomach cannot digest frozen sheep." He glanced at Wimperley and Stoughton. "What's the matter with you fellows?"

The two visitors coughed and apologized and went in search of their overcoats. Clark began to laugh. "And to think that you three are going back to furnaces and steam heat. Do you realize what Belding and I are going through on your behalf?"

They got through the meal somehow, but Belding was utterly abashed. The visitors played with the congealing mutton, poked at forbidden potatoes, absorbed large quantities of scalding tea and then has-

THE RAPIDS

tened back to the big stove. Belding felt a hand on his shoulder.

"It's my fault. We should have let them go to the hotel. I suppose we're used to it, they're not."

Presently, Wimperley began to yawn. "I'm going to bed."

Riggs glanced apprehensively upstairs, where it was even colder than below. "I'm going to sleep in my clothes. My God! pajamas on a night like this. Clark, what are you made of?"

In ten minutes the big stove was deserted, and Clark went from room to room tucking in his shivering visitors.

"You're all right," he said cheerfully at Stoughton's door; "the house won't get any colder because it can't — and it's only thirty below outside. We're going to have a corking day to-morrow."

V.—THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

IT was not till spring came and the earth relaxed her stiff and reappearing bones that Clark really got to work, and then arrived the first battalions of that great influx which was soon to follow. Up at the rapids men and machinery became visible as though by magic. Belding had a curious sensation as he saw the product of his former plans well nigh obliterated in the larger excavation which now began to take shape. His earlier efforts took on their due proportion, and he smiled at the contrast, reveling in his opportunity for the full exercise of his ability. But it is probable that neither Belding nor any others amongst the leading men who, in time, were gathered into the works, realized to what a degree they were animated by the mesmeric influence of Clark.

By this time Bowers, another local appointment, was the legal representative of the Company, and the repository of great intentions which he guarded with scrupulous fidelity. Clark was redeeming his promise not to import that which the town could provide. And then he met the bishop.

He saw the broad-shouldered, black-coated figure contemplating a steam shovel that was gnawing at the rocky soil beside the rapids. The bishop was a big man with a handsome head, well shaped legs adorned with episcopal gaiters, and a broad, deep chest. It was universally admitted that a less ample breast could not have contained so great a heart.

THE RAPIDS

"Good day, sir." Clark involuntarily lifted his hat. The bishop held out a firm white hand. "I've heard of you, Mr. Clark, and am glad to see that Mahomet has come to his mountain. It's a little like a fairy tale to me."

"I hope it may prove as attractive."

"But I believe in fairies, we need them nowadays."

Clark smiled. "I'm afraid that St. Marys doesn't believe in them as yet, but I'll do what I can."

"I suppose you've met every one here in the course of the winter?"

"Most I think. As a matter of fact one hasn't much time."

"That's a new thing in winter in the North. Now show me what's going on, I'm vastly interested."

There was nothing that could have suited Clark better, and the two tramped about for an hour. At the end of it they stood near the head of the rapids and watched a coughing dredge tear into the soft bottom.

"I used to come up here to fish," said the bishop thoughtfully, "and once killed a six pound trout on a six ounce rod, but now you're doing the fishing, and so it goes. Do you expect to begin operations in the woods next winter?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll need some more missionaries. You're making a lot of work for me, but I like it."

His companion glanced up with sudden interest. They both liked work. It had been evident for an hour past in the prelate's keen questions. It occurred to Clark that the influence of his own passion for creation

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

promised to affect a large number of people. But he had never dreamed of missionaries, and now the thought amused him.

"I see young Belding over there," said the bishop as the engineer passed with a transit over his shoulder.

"Yes, my chief engineer."

"A good chap and I'm glad he has the opening. I don't know that he's got much imagination, but a valuable man as I see him. I have an idea," he added quizzically, "that you will supply all the imagination that is necessary."

Clark laughed. "I hope to."

"Had I not gone into the church I would have been a writer or an engineer," said the bishop slowly. "They have always seemed kindred pursuits, and I should have liked to be able to point to something physical and concrete and say 'I made it.'"

Clark was a little puzzled. He had it in mind that the bishop's achievements would be, perhaps, more enduring than his own. He tried to put this into words.

The big man shook his head. "I hope I am making my mark, but who can say? You affect the color of men's lives and I try to reach the complexion of their spirits." He paused for a moment, then added, "But between us we ought to do something. Good-by, and I hope you'll come to one of my garden parties. I hear you don't care for society, but you'll like my strawberries, and in the meantime I trust that all will prosper. Even if St. Marys does not realize all this, does it matter?"

"Not in the slightest."

THE RAPIDS

The bishop strode off. A few paces away he halted. "I'm no Moslem but I'm very glad to meet Mahomet," he called back; "good-by."

In June the general manager, for as such Clark was now known, gave a luncheon at the works, which was to remain long in the mind of at least one of the participants. By this time he himself was beginning to withdraw to that seclusion which added much to the fascination of his personality. When his guests arrived they were turned over to Belding for a tour of inspection, and then, filled with interest and surprise, sat down to the meal Clark had had prepared in the small marquee. Now he appeared himself, the genius of the place, and sat at the head of the table.

Looking back at the curious relationship in which this man stood to the people of St. Marys, it seems that he liked them more than he cared to express, for the expression of any sentiment was strange to his lips. He could do much for them, and did it, while, at the same time, he asked nothing for himself. When not in action, Clark was particularly silent, but when really in action he approached his subject with obvious joy and interest, and coupled with this was his natural instinct for impressive and dramatic situations. Something of this had been recognized by Filmer and the others who came to lunch, so that, afterwards, when he threw out a hint, the only one on record, it met with immediate attention. He was talking to Worden when his eye drew Filmer into the conversation.

"I have been wondering whether any of you gentlemen have bought any land?"

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

The effect was that of a stone thrown into a pool, and one could see the ripples of interest spreading. But it was so unexpected that there followed a little silence, broken presently by a laugh from Filmer.

"What land?"

Clark waved a casual hand north and east. "Any land over there."

He got no immediate reply. The minds of his guests were traversing the flat fields in which cattle grazed, that lay between the rapids and the town.

"You have seen to-day something of what we propose to do, but only some of it," he went on. "What's the present population of St. Marys?"

"About sixteen hundred," said Filmer thoughtfully.

"Well, gentlemen, assume that what you have seen is but the beginning, only the breaking of the ground. You may take it from me, you are safe in that. The population of St. Marys, five years from to-day, should be,—" here he paused for an impressive moment — "sixteen thousand, and in ten years, twenty-six thousand. Now where are those people going to live? Mr. Manson, here, doesn't take me quite seriously, but you, Judge, can you answer me; or you, Mr. Filmer? A good deal of it will fall on your shoulders."

"I don't doubt you," answered the mayor, "but I can use all my money in my business."

"As for me, I'm a government official and haven't any," added Worden, with a tinge of regret.

"Money has been borrowed before this"—Clark's tones were distinctly impersonal—"the bank is good and so is the future of the town, as I see it."

THE RAPIDS

"Why don't you buy some yourself?"

"I don't want any more money," said Clark very simply, "but, gentlemen, I don't assume that every one feels that way. From this window I can see farm lands that can be bought for forty dollars an acre on easy terms, and how would you feel if, after two or three years, it changed hands at a thousand? I merely mention this because I've seen it take place elsewhere. Now I'm not going to say that it's going to be worth a thousand, and I'm not persuading you. I never persuade any one, at least," he added with a little smile, "not in St. Marys. I only draw your attention to the circumstances and leave the rest of it, of course, to your own judgment."

"Then you suggest that we buy?" came in Dibbott.

"Nothing of the kind. It's a matter of indifference to me whether you gentlemen do the buying or some one else. All I can prophesy is, that it's going to be done, but not by me or my associates. We have enough to occupy our attention for some time to come."

Manson edged a bit nearer. "The idea is that while you're investing millions, we take no risk in investing hundreds, eh?"

"I made no such inference. You will remember that so far as St. Marys is concerned I have depended on the town for nothing since my first proposal was accepted."

Dibbott nodded. "That's right. I reckon we're going to be a residential suburb to the works."

Clark smiled a little. "I lean on just four things, and St. Marys supplied none of them."

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

"What are they?"

"Natural laws, physical geography, ample financial backing, and the need of the world for certain manufactured products. And," he concluded quizzically, "you'd better forget that I said anything about land."

There was something suggestively final about this, and presently the group moved off, loitering across the flat, untenanted fields. Manson was in the rear, decapitating daisies with his heavy oak stick. A few minutes later Clark looked up and saw the chief constable's bulk filling the doorway. He waited placidly.

"Did you mean just what you said about that land?" Manson's voice sounded a little sheepish, "because I've got a bit saved up, and —"

"Mr. Manson," struck in Clark, "you may approve of me personally, but I know that you don't believe in my project. You've been at no pains to conceal that and I respect you for it, but that being the case why should you, of all men, be interested in land? No, no, don't protest. I don't mind what you think and you've a perfect right to your own opinion. What did I say about land? Did I advise you to buy?"

"No, but you evidently wondered why we didn't."

Clark laughed outright. "I wonder at many things, that's my privilege, and anything I said just now is in contradiction to your judgment. You strike me as being a man of strong views, so by all means hold on to them."

But Manson's eyes were turned fixedly on the main chance and he could not look away. "Of course, I may be wrong," he began awkwardly, "but —"

THE RAPIDS

"And, of course, I may be too, and now you'll excuse me, I've a good deal to attend to."

Very slowly the chief constable took his way to town. Like many who came in contact with Clark he had conceived the impression of a strong and piercing intelligence that, while it gave out much, withheld more; and it was what he imagined was withheld that now piqued and stimulated the austere masked project he had had in view ever since Clark's directors had so breezily invaded his office months before. Manson was, in truth, an example of those who, externally impassive and unemotional, harbor at times a secret and consuming thought at variance with all outward semblance, and, keeping this remotely hidden, feed it with all the concentrated fire of an otherwise inactive imagination. That afternoon he quietly secured an option on a portion of the fields across which he walked so stolidly, and, with this as a beginning, turned his thoughts to the acquisition of more and more land. Simultaneously his expressed views on the outcome of Clark's activities became more pessimistic than ever.

Early that summer the streets of St. Marys were torn with trenches and the glass fronts of the wooden stores trembled with the vibration of blasting. The pipe lines followed exactly the route laid out by the blue prints Belding had long since deposited with the town council, and so well known was this route that the slightest variation would have been pounced upon instantly. Clark, it appeared, did not take much interest in the work, but turned it over entirely to the

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

engineer, his own imagination having moved to other things.

New faces in the town ceased to create comment, and, what was more to the point, mention of St. Marys began to appear in metropolitan papers. These were read with the peculiar thoroughness of those who, for the first time, found themselves of definite interest to the outside world. Simultaneously the air became full of prophecy, rambling and inchoate. The citizens had not yet come to regard developments as being in any particular their own. They had — for the best reasons — put no money in, but now began to profit by changed conditions. The works were still a thing apart, a new and somewhat romantic area from which anything, however startling, might any day materialize. Sometimes a few Indians paddled up to trade and, leaving Filmer's store, would slip silently up stream, and edging into the backwater at the foot of the rapids, lay their paddles across the thwarts and stare silently at the great structures that began to arise. And this, in a way, was the attitude of most of the folk of St. Marys. They were in it but not of it, and the long somnolence of the past was too tranquil to be easily dispelled. But in spite of their indifference the masterful hand of Clark had set the town definitely on the industrial map. A little later, the water was turned on and rows and rows of electric lights glittered down the streets. It was just about this time that Clark summoned Belding and told him that he desired a house.

This command was, in a way, so intimate that Beld-

THE RAPIDS

ing looked foolish. "What kind of a house?" he said awkwardly.

Clark leaned back in his chair. "You know how, years ago, the Hudson Bay Company built block houses for their factors? Well, I want one such as the company used to build, and I expect to be ready to occupy it within six weeks."

Belding had learned not to ask too many questions, so, for a moment thought hard. "Where?" he ventured.

"You remember where the old Hudson Bay lock is, — just a hundred feet beyond that. By the way, do you know how to build a block house?"

Belding got a little red. He had designed power houses and pulp mills and canals and head gates, but a block house baffled him.

"In those days," began Clark ruminatively, "they were places of defense. Two stories, the bottom one of stone so that the Indians couldn't set fire to it. That part is eight feet high and had loopholes. On top is the other story built of logs, and, by the way, I want my logs peeled and varnished, and with a pitched roof. That part overhangs the other by about five feet all round, and that was to make it possible to drop things on the Indians if they did get up to the loopholes. Got the idea? And, by the way, I want the Hudson Bay lock cleaned out and rebuilt just as it was before. No cement — but random masonry and gates of hewn timber — they hewed everything a hundred years ago — grass around it and a sign saying what it was and when. Fix it up and make a job of it — that's

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

all, and make that block house basement of field stone — you can see why.”

Whereupon Clark turned to a pile of letters and telegrams and promptly forgot all about Belding.

In six weeks, to a day, he moved in, and it is a question whether any of his subsequent achievements occasioned such interest in St. Marys. Old inhabitants were there who had memories of the Hudson Bay Company and the thirty foot bark canoes that once voyaged from Lake Superior, and, treading the upper reaches of a branch of the rapids, slid into the old lock and were let gingerly down while the crew held their paddles against the rough stone walls of the tiny but ancient chamber.

Now the thing in its entirety had been recreated. The block house sat squat beside the lock, with its mushroom top projecting just as in years before. Clark, it seemed, was, after all traditional, and not one who lived entirely in the future, and with this touch of romance he took new attributes. His Japanese cook inhabited the lower story through which one entered to mount to the main floor. Inside the place revealed the taste of the man of the world. It looked pigmy beside the enormous structures which began to rise hard by, but was all the more diminutively impressive. One passed it on the way to the works, and often by night drifted out the sound of Clark's piano mingling with the dull boom of the rapids. For it would seem that these were the two voices to which the brain of this extraordinary man took most heed.

VI.—CONCERNING IRON, WOOD AND A GIRL

A YEAR passed and the folk of St. Marys had not yet accustomed themselves to drawing water from a tap and turning on the light with a switch ere Clark began a frontal attack on the resources of the country to the north. It was typical of his methods that he invariably used new agencies by which to approach affairs which, in the main, differed from those already existing. Thus he called on many and widely separated individuals, who, answering his imperious summons, fell straightway under the spell of his remarkable personality, and found themselves shortly in positions of increasing responsibility. They became the heads of various activities, but, in a way, the secondary heads, for Clark retained all kingship for himself. So it came that as months passed he was surrounded by a constantly increasing band of active and loyal retainers.

Such was John Baudette, for whom Clark had sent to talk pulp wood, but, it is recorded, that Baudette's manner and bearing changed not at all when Clark stared at him across the big flat topped desk and remarked evenly that he wanted pulp wood and was assured that there was an ample supply within fifty miles.

Baudette's hard blue eyes met the stare placidly. "Yes, there is pulp wood north of here."

CONCERNING IRON, WOOD AND A GIRL

"I know it, because I've had some," said Clark, "but I want fifty thousand cords next May and seventy-five thousand the year after."

Baudette felt in a way more at home, but he had never contemplated seventy-five thousand cords of wood. "Am I to go and take it?"

Clark laughed, then settled back with the shadow of a smile on his lips, and bent on the woodsman that swift inspection which discomforted so many. It embarrassed Baudette not at all. He was rather small and of slight build, but he was constructed in the manner of a bundle of steel wire that enfolds a heart of inflexible determination. On casual inspection he did not appear to be a strong man, but his body was a mass of tireless sinew. His eyes were of that cold, hard blue which is the color of fortitude, his face clean shaven and rather thin; his jaw slightly underhung, his lips narrow and tightly compressed. In demeanor he was quiet and almost shy, but it was the quietness of one who has spent his days in the open, and the shyness of a life which has dealt with simple things in a simple but efficient way. The longer Clark looked at him the more he liked this new discovery. Presently he began to talk.

"I want a man to take charge of my forest department, and one who has got his experience at the expense of some one else. We need pulp wood in larger quantities than have been required in this country before. Next year we begin to grind wood that you will cut this winter."

The little man neither moved nor took his eyes from

THE RAPIDS

Clark's face, and the latter, with the faintest twitch of his lip, went on.

"I'm satisfied that this wood exists in ample quantities and the rest is up to you. You can have any reasonable salary you ask for."

"Where are the timber limits?" Baudette said quietly. He was, apparently, uninterested in the matter of salary.

Clark flattened out a big map of the district that obliterated the piles of letters and telegrams. Baudette's eyes brightened. He loved maps, but never before had he seen one so minute and comprehensive.

"That's compiled from all available surveys and records. It took three months to make it. I was getting ready for you."

Baudette nodded. He was interested in how the thing was compiled, and his eyes traced the birth and flow of rivers and the great sweep of well remembered lakes. Presently Clark's voice came in again.

"Where's the best pulp wood? We've been getting it from everyw'here."

A lean brown forefinger slid slowly over the edge of the map. Clark noted its delicacy and strength. It halted a moment at St. Marys, then, as though Baudette counted the miles, traversed the shore of Superior and turned into a great bay to the westward. At the belly of the bay the finger struck inland following a wide river, and halted in a triangle of land where the river forked. Baudette looked up and nodded.

"Ah!" said Clark thoughtfully. "How much good wood is there?"

CONCERNING IRON, WOOD AND A GIRL

The forefinger commenced an irregular course during which it struck into salients that followed up lesser and tributary streams. It had enclosed perhaps five hundred square miles of Canadian territory when it reached its starting point.

"Four years' wood." Baudette's voice was still impressive.

The other man smiled as though in subdued mirth, and with a red pencil outlined the area. Following this his eyes rested contemplatively on the lumberman who sat still focussed on the map.

"Come back in two weeks," he said suddenly. "Good morning."

Baudette glanced at him, and went out so quietly that there was not the sound of a footstep. Clark's manner of speech and person had set him thinking as never before. Ten thousand cords of wood a year was the usual order of things, but of fifty thousand cords he had never dreamed.

He had a new set of sensations which filled him with a novel confidence in his own powers. He was reacting, like all the others, to the intimate touch of a communicative confidence. He passed thoughtfully through the general office, noting as he closed the door that on a bench near Clark's door sat Fisette, a French halfbreed whom he knew. He remarked also that Fisette's pockets were bulging, it seemed, with rocks.

A moment later Fisette was summoned. He went in, treading lightly on the balls of his feet, and leaning forward as though under a load on a portage.

THE RAPIDS

Clark's office always frightened him a little. The rumble of the adjoining power house, the great bulk of the buildings just outside, the masses of documents,—all of this spoke of an external power that puzzled and, in a way, worried him. He halted suddenly in front of the desk.

"Well?" said Clark, without offering him a seat, for Fisette was more at ease when he stood.

The halfbreed felt in his pockets. The other unrolled a duplicate of the map he had shown Baudette and held out his hand, in which Fisette placed some pieces of rock.

At the weight and chill of them, Clark experienced a peculiar thrill, then, under a magnifying glass he examined each with extreme care, turning them so that the light fell fair on edge and fracture. One after another he scrutinized, while the breed stood motionless.

"Where do they come from?" he said shortly.

The breed made a little noise in his throat, and his dark eyes rested luminously on the keen face. After a little he gathered the samples and disposed them on the map, laying each in that corner of the wilderness from which it had been broken. He did this with the deliberation of one who knew beyond all question. He had brought months of hardship and exposure in his pocket. By swamp and hill, valley and lake and rapid he had journeyed alone in search of the gray, heavy, shiny rock of which Clark had, months before, given him a fragment, with curt orders to seek the like. The small, angular pieces were all arranged, and his chief stared at them with profound geological interest. Fi-

CONCERNING IRON, WOOD AND A GIRL

sette did not move. He had looked forward to this moment.

"They're no good," came the level voice, after a pause, "but you're in the right country. Go back for another two months. You'll get it yet. It should be near this," he picked up a sample. "Take what men you want, or no, don't take any. I want you to do this yourself, and don't talk. Good morning."

Fisette nodded dumbly. The moment had come and gone and he felt a little paralyzed.

"Here, have a cigar."

He took one, such a cigar as he had never seen, large, dark and fat with a golden band around its plump middle. He glanced at Clark, who apparently had forgotten him, and went silently out. On the doorstep he paused, slid off the golden band and put it in his pocketbook, cupped a lighted match between his polished palms, took one long luxurious breath and started thoughtfully to town with worship and determination in his breast.

Clark, from the office window, was looking down at his broad back in a moment of abstraction. At Fisette's departure he had suddenly plunged into one of those moods so peculiar to his temperament. Beside the halfbreed he seemed to perceive Stoughton, and with Baudette he discerned the figure of Riggs, and so on till there were marshalled before him the whole battalion of those who were caught up in the onward march. He realized, without any hesitation, that should Baudette fail in his work, the magnificent bulk of the great pulp mill would be but a futile shell. And should the

THE RAPIDS

prospecting pick of the half-breed not uncover that which he sought, the entire enterprise would lack its basic security. But it was characteristic of the man that this vision brought with it no depression, but seemed rather to point to ultimate success in the very blending of diverse elements that strove together towards the same end.

Two weeks later, Baudette returned and looked questioningly at his chief. In very few words he explained that the fortnight had been spent in the woods and that what he had said was correct.

Clark listened silently. Here was a man to his liking. When the lumberman finished he again unrolled the big map, but this time instead of the wavering red pencil line, there was the bold demarcation of a much greater area, which Belding's draughtsman had plotted in professional style. In the middle of it was the territory Baudette had previously indicated.

"I thought we'd better be safe, and got this — from the Government. Go to the chief accountant in the outside office. Give him an estimate of what money you need for the next six months — and get to work — Good morning."

Baudette merely nodded and disappeared. There was too much in his mind to admit of expressing it, but, even had he felt conversational, there was a finality about his dismissal that left no opening. He went away charged with a grim determination. Here was the chance he had been waiting for all his life.

And Clark had, by this time, labelled Baudette as a valuable and dependable man. He forthwith forgot

CONCERNING IRON, WOOD AND A GIRL

all about him, and went back to the memory of Baudette's forefinger as it pushed its way up to the Magwa River. It flashed upon him that, in the course of a vehemently active life, he had built practically all things save one. At that he fell into a reverie which ended with the pressing of a button that flashed a small red light on Belding's desk. A moment later he glanced keenly at his chief engineer.

"Belding, you have done railway work. What does a standard gauge road cost in this country?"

"Where is the road to be built?" Belding displayed no surprise. The time for that had long passed, and, he silently concluded, the presidency of a railroad would suit Clark admirably.

"Up the Magwa River."

"And the maximum grades?"

"Suitable for freight haulage to this point. We run with the water," added Clark with one of his rare smiles, "you ought to know that."

"About thirty thousand a mile," answered Belding steadily, the trouble being that when his chief's imagination took strong hold of him he was apt to diverge from the point.

"Then you will send out survey parties and get detailed estimates when the surveys are in."

"How far is the road to run? The head waters of the Magwa are one hundred and fifty miles from its mouth."

Clark's lips tightened a little. "As far as the pulp wood is good. I don't care how far that is — and, Belding —"

THE RAPIDS

"Yes, sir."

"I have decided to double the size of the mill. Let me have plans and estimates for that too."

Belding went on, his head swimming, and walked slowly toward the head gates through which Lake Superior flowed obediently to do Clark's will. It seemed now that his chief had reached the point where the god in the machine must make some grievous error. He was insatiable. Presently two figures approached. One was Judge Worden, the other a girl. The former waved his stick.

"We're going to see Mr. Clark. Elsie, this is Mr. Belding."

The girl smiled and put out a slim hand. "I've heard about you — did you make all this?" Her brother moved, taking in the great sweep of rising structures.

"In a way, yes," he laughed, "that is I did what I was told."

"Mr. Belding is chief engineer," put in the judge, ringing the bell.

She nodded. "You told me. I — I think it's rather wonderful. Anything had to happen to the rapids, this is just right."

Belding made no immediate answer. He was studying the girl's face, her supple figure, and the intelligence that marked every expression. It struck him that she was meant to be some man's comrade.

"I'm glad you like it," he said a little awkwardly, "there's lots more to come."

The judge touched Elsie's arm. "That's what I

CONCERNING IRON, WOOD AND A GIRL

want to hear about at the block house, and I hope you'll have supper with us next Sunday, Mr. Belding. I hear you are too busy for a weekday diversion."

Elsie smiled approval and they turned down the long embankment.

Belding looked after them with a shade of resentment. She was, he had decided, just like her photograph. In the distance he had seen Clark walking quickly towards his visitors. They met a hundred yards away and Clark's eyes began to twinkle.

"How do you do. I seem to know you quite well already."

Elsie flushed. She had pictured Clark in her romantic brain, but this trim figure resembled none of her expectations.

"I'm very sorry," he went on quickly, "that urgent business will keep me in the office all afternoon. I've just a few minutes."

"Then we'll be off at once," announced the judge.

"Not at all, if there's anything here to interest you, the place is yours."

Elsie glanced at him curiously. She was conscious both of disappointment and of a certain invitational thrill. His assurance was not just what she had looked for, but yet it stimulated her thought. He was very different from every one else. Decision marked him and a flash that was breathless seemed to reach her. Imagination lay in his quick change of expression and in the depths of the gray eyes. This was the man who dreamed great dreams.

"The next time you are up this way I hope you and

THE RAPIDS

your friends will come to the block house." He was looking at her with evident interest. "You may not like it, but, I think you will,—it makes a background for this"; he pointed to the works, "and I find it restful. I live quite alone except for a Japanese cook, and," he added with a laugh, "he's part of the background."

Elsie accepted and, for an instant, caught Clark's full glance. In a fraction of time there passed between them a swift and subconscious exchange of understanding that subsided almost ere it was born. Then he took off his hat and hastened towards his office.

For a little while she did not speak, for she was filled with the perception that between herself and this stranger lay something they held in common. Could it be imagination?

"What do you think of Mr. Belding?" asked the judge reflectively as he stepped round a shattered boulder.

Elsie started. "Why do you ask?"

The judge's brows went up. "Why shouldn't I?"

The girl pulled herself together with an effort. "I was thinking of something else when you spoke,—he seems very nice indeed."

"He has a good salary, a good position and a good future," hazarded the judge. "I'm glad you like him."

Later that evening, Belding turned homeward, his work finished, and, walking close to the shore, looked across the black river to the black of light at the works. On one side and low down he made out the glow from

CONCERNING IRON, WOOD AND A GIRL

the block-house windows. He could imagine Clark at the piano.

But his chief had deserted the piano and given himself up to a rare hour of retrospect. He was under no misapprehension with regard to St. Marys. The town was growing in jerky spurts, as the old inhabitants took on new courage, or new blood came in from outside. Filmer, who with the exception of Bowers and Belding, was closer to Clark than any of the rest, enlarged his store, and new shops began to appear nearer the rapids. Manson's premises were populated with an assortment from the small army of laborers at the works, and a new hotel was under construction. But, in the main, it was only by stress of business demands that any expansion was made. The strangers, who constantly appeared on the streets, ceased to be a cause of curiosity, and the folk of St. Marys left it to them to start new enterprises.

As to Clark, himself, he began to be almost invisible to the townspeople. There was nothing, after all, to bring him to town. Others came to him. And ever the call of the rapids grew louder and more dominant in his active brain. Others slept when he was awake, and his imagination, caught up in a tremendous belief in the future of the country, explored the horizon for new avenues and enterprises, while the conclusions of his prophetic mind filled him with unfailing confidence. He had now achieved the ability to arrive intuitively at results reached by others after long and arduous labor. This faculty was one of his outstanding gifts, no less than his mesmeric and communicative influence.

VII.—THE BISHOP'S GARDEN PARTY — AND AFTERWARDS

SOME three miles down the river from the block-house and on the east side of St. Marys lived the bishop. Of him it might be said that, like Clark's, his reputation extended far beyond the boundaries of this northern district. But between these two, so alike in their magnetic qualities, lay a substantial difference. Clark expressed himself in large undertakings and great physical structures, while the bishop worked in the hearts of men.

It was the custom of this most amiable prelate to give a garden party once a year, to which came most of the adult population of St. Marys. The house, a square gray stone block, lay at the edge of the bush and around it was a spacious lawn from which one could saunter through the vegetable garden and into the stable, and on this lawn, his hands clasped behind his back, his head bent forward in thought, the bishop might often be observed, a modern St. Francis, plunged in profound thought.

Now, looking contentedly at the groups around him, he concluded that never before had his party been so well attended. Dibbott and Filmer and Bowers were there with their wives, and young Belding with the Wordens. The Presbyterian minister and the Catholic priest were admiring the strawberries, and Manson's deep voice came from a cluster of men nearby. Most

THE BISHOP'S GARDEN PARTY

of the ladies wore spotless white dresses that crackled as they moved. In the study the bishop's desk was obliterated by dishes of strawberries and cream, and at the front gate the hired man took charge of the buggies and tethered the horses to the long fence of the pasture field. Three hundred yards away the river sparkled in a clear, light blue. It was all very bright and animated. Presently the bishop caught the young engineer's eyes and beckoned.

"Mr. Belding," he said, smiling, "I'm aware that you're very much occupied just now with important things, but I've been wondering, just the same, if you'd help me with something."

"What is it, Bishop?"

"I want a pro-cathedral, which is, as you know, that which does instead of a cathedral. Every summer the church here seems to get smaller, and I believe I could fill a bigger one."

Belding laughed. He, like the rest, knew that the largest church in the country could not hold those who flocked to hear this golden voice.

"How much money is available?" he hazarded, "and have you any idea what it is intended to spend. What about plans?"

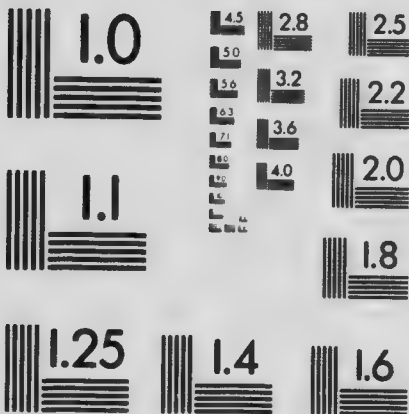
"That's just it, we have no money and, of course, no plans, but, considering the amount of building material you use every day, it struck me that there might be laid aside enough to construct what I want without causing any hardship."

Belding hesitated, but so friendly was the look on the bishop's face and so quizzical the glance of the large



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

THE RAPIDS

brown eyes that he felt immediately prompted to build a pro-cathedral. He felt a hand on his shoulder.

"History has it that not so very long ago a certain young engineer expressed that which was highest in his nature by building a cathedral. Think it over." And with that the bishop turned to the Indian agent who was moving mountainously across the lawn.

"Well, Mr. Dibbott, it seems just the other day when I arrived first in St. Marys and drove under a green arch at Mr. Filmer's dock and the entire population met me. One couldn't achieve that now. Great things are happening."

"You mean up at the works, sir?"

"Yes. I went over them again last week and had a short talk with Mr. Clark — a very remarkable man — though, I confess that so far I have not observed him at church. I touched on that as a matter of fact."

Dibbott's pale blue eyes opened a little wider. "And what did he say?"

"He said that from his point of view the church was too divided within itself to impress him very forcibly."

"Ah!" grunted Dibbott — "and then?"

"I came back at him with the fact that the church was naturally divided by the moods of its followers."

"It's so, sir, we all know it."

The bishop cast an interested glance over the groups that now covered the lawn. He seemed not in the least depressed at the inward troubles of the church. Presently his eyes began to twinkle. "It's perfectly true.

THE BISHOP'S GARDEN PARTY

There are three schools of thought, that I've observed myself."

"What are they?" said Worden, who had silently come up.

"Platitudinarian; latitudinarian; attitudinarian," came the answer, with a chuckle, then, turning to Filmer, who had stepped over to hear the joke, he added, "What do you think of my boat?" and pointed to a slim, black, two-masted steam-yacht that lay anchored just off the shore.

It was common knowledge that the bishop had spent part of a winter abroad collecting funds, and it was further admitted that it was impossible for him to visit the multitude of islands that lay in his charge without some independent means of transportation, but St. Marys was not yet aware that the trick had been turned.

"She means three months' work," went on the bishop thoughtfully, but without a shade of self-satisfaction, "and the biggest subscription I got was a hundred pounds. The smallest was from the owner of a large steamship line. He gave me one of the Company's official prayer books — and I never before felt about the prayer book just as I did about that one. I was begging mostly in England, and traveled about like a sort of mitred mendicant, addressing missionary meetings. It was the elderly ladies who did it, bless 'em. Then I went down to Cowes in the Isle of Wight and you see the result. There she is, solid oak and teak, a compound engine, twelve miles an hour, and good, I think, for any sea, no matter how tempestuous. I won't care

THE RAPIDS

now if there is no railway connection in half my diocese."

The others smiled and Filmer stroked his bushy, black whiskers. "You're going to be a regular sybarite," he ventured.

"No," chuckled the bishop, "an anchorite." And with that sent his mind up stream to the rapids and the activity at the works. "I'm interested to see how much has been done here in what is really so short a time, only two years. It all seems to me so magnificent in its scope, and, as for Mr. Clark, who is evidently the center of the thing, one cannot but admire his incredible energy. I understand we have to thank our mayor for a good deal of it. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Manson?"

The chief constable, whose bulk had drawn up beside the others, shook his head gloomily. His face and manner were, in spite of his surroundings, still austere.

"No, sir, I don't admire Mr. Clark."

"But why?"

"Because, as I see it, he is only squandering the money of people whom he has hypnotized. He's got no balance, and the only thing he cares about is to spend — spend — spend."

Filmer smiled meaningly. The bishop glanced at him puzzled, then turned to Manson.

"Then you're not in any way impressed?"

"Not in the least."

"Well," came the deep, rich voice, "I must confess that I am not only by what he spends but also by the

THE BISHOP'S GARDEN PARTY

undeniable fact that he has filled my church and your jail. Perhaps they go together," he added with a contagious grin.

Dibbott looked slightly shocked, but the bishop went on after an eloquent glance at Filmer.

"I found much that was admirable up there. It's true that we don't see eye to eye in certain things that appear all important to me, but perhaps also that was to be expected. Now will you excuse me a moment? I see two friends out by the roadside who haven't on their party clothes."

His gaitered legs struck off across the lawn and Filmer's glance followed the powerful figure as it halted at the fence beside two Indians who waited irresolutely while their dark eyes explored the animated scene. The bishop, seemingly forgetful of all else, entered into an earnest conversation, during which a copper colored palm was held out to him, and in the palm the group could see something small and round that gleamed softly in the late afternoon sun. At that the bishop shook his head gravely and the palm was withdrawn, when there followed more talk in lowered tones, after which he vaulted the fence and came slowly back, his lips compressed and a quizzical smile on his big handsome face. He shot a look at the group but said nothing.

"What is it, sir?" asked Dibbott.

"Something that touches our conversation, curiously enough. Those two Indians have just paddled up from the settlement to ask me to bless a silver bullet, and they are parishioners of mine too."

THE RAPIDS

"Why?" put in Manson abruptly.

"They say the bullet is to kill a wolf who is haunting the neighborhood and is possessed by a spirit of a bad man who died there only recently. He apparently has an insatiable appetite for Indian children, though no damage has been done as yet. It must have been a Unitarian spirit since he is evidently a one idea wolf," he pursued with a provocative grimace at the stolid Manson who was of that persuasion.

The others roared, but Manson, without a smile, held his ground.

"Why a bullet that has been blessed?"

"They assure me it is the only kind that can kill an animal inhabited by a spirit." The bishop's hand stole up to his jaw, in a favorite gesture. "Our conversation suggested the matter of Mr. Clark."

Filmer and the rest racked their brains in vain, then pleaded for light.

"Well," went on the deep voice, "these Indians profess the Christian faith, yet they get into their bark canoes and paddle twelve miles against the wind and up stream with a petition that I do something that is dead against that faith, I mean the blessing of a bullet to arm it with supernatural power. Our friend, Mr. Clark, on the other hand, does not, so far as I know, profess any faith at all, though I should undoubtedly be asked to bury him should such a thing be unfortunately necessary, yet he does many things that I consider admirable without asking any blessing or unction or special recognition of any kind. I cannot see him, for instance, as a man who would use his friends for his

THE BISHOP'S GARDEN PARTY

own advantage or their money for his personal profit. In fact," he hesitated a little and then continued with that utter candor which characterized his entire life — "what I hope for our church is that it may so present its message and carry out its mission that it will ultimately attract just the type of notable men as the one of which we speak. And now, since this begins to border on a theological discussion, let us have some strawberries and cream. They are my own berries, and the cream, Mr. Filmer, is the product of that excellent yearling you were kind enough to send me last summer."

They moved into the study and were presently joined by Mrs. Dibbott and Mrs. Worden.

"We have seen the yacht," said the latter enthusiastically, "and she is lovely, but how do you pronounce her name?"

The Bishop's eyes twinkled — "Just now its Z-e-n-o-b-i-a, but that's the name of a heathen queen and I don't believe the Synod would stand for it. Can you ladies suggest something more suitable? You know what her work will be."

Mrs. Dibbott thought hard, and Mrs. Worden's gray eyes grew soft. Admirable women were these, staunch and loyal, the helpmates of men through lonely years that had passed in St. Marys. But too often the men did not realize this till the shadows lengthened.

"She'll be a messenger, won't she?" said Mrs. Worden.

"Of hope and comfort, if I can make her so," he

THE RAPIDS

answered gently. "I can regularly reach places now that it was very hard to get at before."

There fell a little silence. while, to the rest came the picture of this wise man and true, cruising in storm and sunshine through the myriad islands of his diocese, with his good cheer and his understanding heart and his great tenderness for all living beings.

"May I make you a flag?" said Mrs. Dibbott presently.

"Splendid, I haven't one. You might put on my crest. It's an Irish one with a complete menagerie of animals."

"And some of the rest of us will provide the linen," added Mrs. Worden, who was a famous housekeeper.

"My dear ladies, your sex is really the backbone of ours and not the missing rib," said the bishop who, when he was genuinely touched, often relapsed into his native humor. "But what shall we call the boat? I can't go on missionary voyages with an Indian pilot and a Scotch engineer in a slim, black, piratical looking vessel that flies the name of a heathen queen. Even my gaiters wouldn't save me from being misunderstood."

"Would the name 'Evangeline' do?" asked a gentle voice as Mrs. Manson, who had been listening intently, moved a little closer. She breathed the word very soft and her large expressive eyes shot an uncertain glare at the broad back of her husband who stood just out of hearing.

"Evangeline!" The bishop had a sudden thrill in his tones. "Evangeline she shall be, and may I prove worthy of my vessel."

THE BISHOP'S GARDEN PARTY

A little later the three ladies went together and rather silently down the plank walk that led from the See House to the main road. Their eyes were on the tapering spars of the yacht that floated so gracefully a few hundred yards away.

"I wonder," said Mrs. Dibbott pensively, "if we really appreciate him."

"Meaning the Bishop?" demanded Mrs. Worden.

"Yes. He's a much bigger man than we realize, and he certainly gave up a great deal to come here."

"The most eloquent preacher in Canada, isn't he, but after all, could a smaller man do his work?"

"Perhaps, in a sort of way, but, of course, not half as well. I think, too, that we have to remember he left the places where he met those of his own kind, and he must miss that."

"But he loves his work."

"Only some of it," put in Mrs. Manson. "I heard him say so. He told me he hated begging, and we all know he has to raise the money to run the diocese as well as spend it."

Mrs. Dibbott shook her head. "A bishop shouldn't have to beg, it's lowering. Don't you think so?"

"It would be to some," said the little woman thoughtfully, "but it couldn't lower our bishop. As for being isolated, of course he is, but so are the rest of us, and I shouldn't be surprised if it's the out of the way places that need the best men, and — goodness! here's Mr. Clark."

Three pairs of very keen eyes fixed on a neat, rather thickset figure that came rapidly toward them. It was

THE RAPIDS

but seldom now that Clark was seen in town, and this invested him with more suggestiveness than ever. He stepped off the sidewalk with a somewhat formal salute as they passed. Knowing that he would not pause, Mrs. Dibbott turned and looked after him with a long satisfying stare.

"Not a bit interested in us," she remarked acidly.

"Nor in any woman, I hear," added Mrs. Worden. "There's no room for them in his life. I mean in an emotional way."

"How perfectly fascinating. I'd love to know him."

The brisk steps behind them halted at the gate where the bishop was saying good-by to his last guest.

"I'm late, I'll not stay," said Clark apologetically.

"That's all the better for a chat. You're looking well."

"I have to be well, Bishop, for my work, and you?"

"Perhaps it's the same in a rather less dramatic field."

For a while the two walked with the mutual liking which able men experience for each other when neither is animated by the desire for personal gain. In truth, the attraction was understandable. The bishop responded easily to his guest's magnetic presence, and perceived in him the focal power that energized each one of his successive undertakings, while to Clark came the strength and benignity of the bishop's high and blameless spirit. They were doing each other good, and each silently acknowledged it.

"You are accomplishing great things up at the

THE BISHOP'S GARDEN PARTY

rapids, Mr. Clark," said the bishop presently. "I was very much impressed by what I saw last week."

Clark nodded contentedly. "We're really only at the beginning of it, and the country about here has been only scratched so far. We're on the doorstep, so to speak."

"Then developments should increase?"

"In ten years St. Marys will be the center of great and widespread activities. The district can and will yield a greater variety of natural products than has been imagined."

"You feel this?"

"I know it."

The conviction in his voice was so impressive that the bishop paused. "Well, Mr. Clark," he said after a moment, "like others I must thank you for having made a remarkable improvement in our physical comfort. Even my friend Fisette down there,"—he pointed to the halfbreed's cabin that lay between the See House and the river—"even my friend Fisette has electric light in his house."

"Ah! Is that where Fisette lives?"

"You know him?"

"He works for me."

"Then he's like many of my friends in St. Marys. The pulp mills are doing well?"

"Their capacity will shortly be doubled."

The bishop nodded and scanned the keen face with renewed interest. "I have heard it stated that the measure of a country's industrial progress depends largely on the degree to which it produces steel and

THE RAPIDS

iron. Now I'm no student of economics, but the assertion seems reasonable. Your countrymen across Lake Superior have, I know, enormous deposits, and of course there's not a question as to their industrial progress, but so far as I have ascertained there are none in this region. I assume that you have considered the matter and I would be interested to know your opinion."

"I have reason to believe," answered Clark, staring fixedly at Fisette's vine-grown cabin, "that large deposits do exist within a reasonable distance of St. Marys. You will understand, of course, that this is not an official statement, and I would be obliged if you would not repeat it. I offer it," he added with a glance of calm sincerity, "to reinforce my undertakings in your eyes. Your economic contention is perfectly sound."

"I'm very glad to hear it, and you need no justification and need have no qualms. In fact," here the bishop spoke slowly while his brown eyes looked straight into the keen, gray orbs of his visitor, "you came up here and did what you have done because you had to. Isn't that it?"

"Yes," said Clark simply, "I had to."

"Believe me, I quite understand. Now I wonder if you will understand when I say how happy I would be to see you sometimes at church. It would help me, and you too, and, I think, others as well."

"I understand perfectly," Clark replied gravely and in the most friendly tones possible, "but my entire mind and intelligence are intensely preoccupied. You will

THE BISHOP'S GARDEN PARTY

appreciate too that my imagination plays no small part in my work. Every intellectual process and every movement are demanded of me."

"What I refer to is neither mental nor imaginative, it is spiritual," said the bishop gently.

"I am afraid that I am principally conscious of the works, for the present at any rate."

The bishop sighed inaudibly, then the visitor felt a hand on his arm. "The wisest of all men once said that 'by their works ye shall know them.' What better can I say to you?"

They parted a moment later, and Clark moved slowly down the plank walk. He was apparently deep in thought. Opposite Fisette's cabin he halted as though to go in, but turned homeward. That night he stood long at the blockhouse window, listening to the boom of the rapids and staring at the mass of buildings of his own creation. They were alive with light and throbbing with energy. Below the power house the white water raced away from the turbines and down the tail race, like a living thing, to lose itself in the placid bosom of the river. Still further on rose the uneven outlines of still greater structures as yet unfinished, and the earth seemed, in the cool air, to be baring her ancient bones to his drills and dynamite. Still staring, he remembered the bishop's words and a strange thrill crept through him. These were his works, and how should he be known?

That night, too, there stood at another window another man who could just see the gleam of the rapids in the moonlight. Their softened voice came to him in

THE RAPIDS

stillness, and far across the water glinted the trembling reflection of electric light at the works. Slowly into his brain the dull vibration wove itself like the low murmur of invisible multitudes. Whatever might be his own effort or labor, this still reached him so often as he listened, as though it were a confused and unending appeal for help that would not be silenced. It was always there, compelling and well nigh immortal, and the persistent echo had long since entered into his heart where it stirred pitifully day and night. The bishop dropped on his knees and prayed that he might be made worthy for his work.

There were two others to whom the voice of the rapids came clearly that night as they sat on the edge of the judge's lawn. Belding was very much in love. Months ago he perceived that Elsie was designed to be some man's comrade, and for months he had been constantly aware of an oval face and dark brown eyes. He saw them whenever he peered through an instrument. But the only sign Elsie had given him was the spontaneous kinship of youth with youth.

At the garden party there was little opportunity for talk and he had eagerly accepted the judge's suggestion to spend the evening with them. Now Elsie was beside him at the water's edge.

"I was up at the works again, with father, the other day. Aren't they wonderful?" she said, after a long pause.

"Perhaps — I don't often think of them that way, though."

"What a difference in two years!"

THE BISHOP'S GARDEN PARTY

"I suppose so." Belding was tired and he didn't want to talk shop.

"I met Mr. Clark again, and he was charming."

"Was he?"

She laughed. "I gathered from you at the garden party that he was a woman hater."

"Did I say that?"

"Not exactly, but that he didn't care for women, he was too busy."

"He never mentioned one to me, except his mother."

"I can understand that," said Elsie very thoughtfully.

Belding felt a little restless. "You seem very interested."

"I am. I never met any one like him. He seems to be two men, or several all rolled into one. You admire him, don't you?"

"Yes, tremendously, but he scares me a bit sometimes."

"Why?"

"I have wretched moments in which it seems that he is riding for a fall. Things are going so fast, too fast sometimes — and besides, I'm tired."

She glanced at him swiftly, but in the glance he caught nothing of what he sought.

"If you're tired," she said slowly, "what about Mr. Clark? He's carrying the whole thing, isn't he, as well as creating it? Is that his piano in the block-house?"

The young man nodded.

"What does he play?"

THE RAPIDS

"Nothing that I remember; he improvises. It rests him, I suppose."

"Has he many friends?"

"I don't know that he wants many."

"Then he sits there alone in the evenings and plays to himself,—I wonder if it really is to himself? Don't you believe that somewhere there must be some one he is playing to, and that it's for some one he's doing all that's going on?" Elsie spoke a little breathlessly and her eyes were luminous. "How old is he?"

"Perhaps between thirty-five and forty, I never asked—one doesn't ask him that sort of thing. He never struck me as being of any particular age."

"But you're going to follow him always, aren't you, and help to see him through? He's following something too."

"What's that?" said Belding a little stiffly.

"His star." The girl's voice was very soft. "Perhaps he'll never reach it, but that doesn't matter, if he follows it."

"Mr. Clark would differ with you there."

"Would he, I don't know. Perhaps I understand him better than you do."

Belding got up in swift discomfort. "It looks as if you did."

Her lips curved into a smile. "Don't go yet. Doesn't it seem as though all this were meant to be from the beginning, and isn't Mr. Clark in the grip of something bigger than himself?"

"It's pretty big if he is."

"I know, but isn't he a prophet in the wilderness."

THE BISHOP'S GARDEN PARTY

the wilderness of Algoma, and he hasn't much honor except what a few of us give him?"

Belding looked at her strangely. This was a new Elsie, who seemed wistful — yet not for him. Her eyes were cloudy with thought and he had a curious sensation that he was at this moment far from her imagination. She turned to him.

"Take me out in your canoe, now."

He felt suddenly and inexpressibly happy. "Come along."

She leaned back against the cushions while Belding dipped a practiced blade in the unruffled stream. The night was clear and the sky studded with innumerable stars.

"Where to?" he said contentedly.

She waved a slim hand towards the rapids. "As near as you can, then round into the big bay."

He put his back into his work and the canoe shot forward, reaching presently those long foam-flecked swells that mark the foot of the turmoil. In ten minutes they were in the heel of the rapids and as far as Belding dared go with so precious a burden. Elsie felt the cold spray on her face and her eyes shone with delight. After a little she pointed northward and the canoe edged into the big bay that stretched below the works.

The bulk of the pulp mill loomed darkly into the quiet air, and further up they could hear the rattle of machine drills hammering into the great sandstone ledges. Passing the pigmy lock of the old Hudson Bay Company, they floated a hundred yards from shore

THE RAPIDS

and immediately opposite the blockhouse. Here Elsie lifted her hand, and Belding, with a queer feeling of resentment, backed water.

The upper part of the house was softly lighted and the windows were open. Its gabled roof seemed diminutive compared to the structures which were taking shape close by and, as they looked, there drifted out the sound of a piano. Clark himself was invisible, but his finger tips were talking to the glistening keys. Elsie listened breathlessly. This was the man within the man who now sat plunged in profound meditation.

Presently the music ceased and Clark's figure appeared at the window. He was staring at the rapids, and it seemed that as he stared he set up some mysterious communication that linked his own force and determination with their irresistible sweep.

On the way back Elsie was very silent and it came upon Belding with dull insistency that whatever attraction he had hoped to have for the girl had been merged in the fact that, for the present at any rate, he was nothing more than a means of satisfying her sudden and, to him, fantastical interest in the man under whose dominant bidding the color of so many lives was being modified and blended.

VIII.—IRON

A YEAR later a prospector was slowly pushing his way through the wilderness some seventy miles northward of St. Marys. It was springtime and the air was mild, but, while the ridges were already bare, great banks of snow still lay in the deep folds of the hills where the sun but touched them at noon hour. The endless lacework of naked branches now began to be feathered with tender green, and everywhere the bush was alive with the voices of wild things whose blood was stirred to mating by the soft caresses of the southerly wind. Thrusting through a patch of tangled undergrowth, the man reached higher ground and, advancing to a hillock, stood with his hat off and his brown face steaming with sweat.

He was of middle age, with short, sturdy frame, a broad face of pale, copper color, swarthy black brows and a small, stringy mustache. His feet were enclosed in shoepacks, soggy with water, and he was otherwise clad in the nondescript fashion of old bushmen. Around his shoulders were strung a compass, binoculars and map case, and at his belt dangled a small ax and a prospector's hammer pick. He was torn, scratched, and in a general way disheveled, but the clear glance of the black eyes and the easy grace of his pose proclaimed him fit for action.

He stood for some time while his keen glance

THE RAPIDS

searched the country ahead — a frozen sea in which congealed billows of rock thrust up their tumbled heads in a gigantic confusion. Here and there were more definite ridges that took a general trend, but for the most part it was a chaos of rock and timber, slope and swamp, the refuse from the construction of a more attractive country which had been assembled elsewhere.

Presently Fisette took out his compass, balanced it in the palm of his sinewy hand and glanced at the needle. As he glanced, this filament of soft iron began to tremble and swing. He stood fascinated. Slowly at first, but gradually with more active and jerky motions, the thing became possessed. It vibrated as though in doubt, then moved off in continued restlessness. Not by any means could Fisette end these vagaries. After a little, a slow light grew in his eyes, his strong face broadened into a smile and, snapping back the compass lid, he strode down hill.

A quarter of an hour later he was chipping the edges of a ridge of blackish-gray rock from which he had stripped great rolls of damp, green moss. The rock lay exposed and glistening, its polished surface scarred with the scratches of hard stones that once lay embedded in the feet of prehistoric glaciers, but Fisette, screwing his bushy brows over a tiny magnifying glass and peering at the sparkling fragments in his palm and balancing their weight, cared nothing for glaciers. He only knew he had found that which he had been seeking for more than a year.

There is no measuring device for joy, and no foot-rule one can lay on emotion, but it is questionable if

IRON

to the heart of any man comes greater lightness than to that of the one who by stress and endurance in the wilderness, upturns the treasure he has so arduously sought. These moments are few and rapt and precious, and they glowed in the slow brain of the half-breed Fisette as nothing else had ever glowed. It was true that he stood to do well and earn independence out of this discovery, but he was conscious at the instant of a reward greater than ease and comfort and money to spend. He had backed himself, single-handed, against the wilderness, and he had won. Again he unrolled from a strip of caribou skin the fragment of ore Clark had given him — the fragment he was to match — and laid it amongst the fresh chip-pings at his feet. Only by size and shape could he distinguish it.

Now it may be assumed that Fisette forthwith threw his tattered hat into the air and gave way to noisy manifestations of joy. He did nothing of the kind, for in his hairy breast were combined the practical side of his French father and the noiseless secrecy of an Indian mother. There was much to be done, and he went about it with voiceless determination. First of all he blazed a jack pine whose knotted roots grasped nakedly at the ridge, and marked it boldly with his name and the number of his prospecting license and the date, which latter, he remembered contentedly, was the birthday of his youngest child.

This accomplished, he disappeared in the bush and two hours later reappeared bending forward under a pack strap whose broad center strained against his

THE RAPIDS

swarthy forehead. And in the pack were a small shed tent and his camping outfit. Making a tiny, smokeless fire of dry wood, he cooked and ate, stopping now and again to listen intently. But all he heard was the chuck'le of a hidden spring and the insolent familiarity of a blue jay, which, perched in a branch immediately above, eyed the prospector's frying pan with a bright inquiring gaze.

By noon of the second day Fisette had blazed the enclosing boundaries of three claims, along the middle of which for three quarters of a mile he had traced the ridge of ore, and when corner posts were in, he shouldered his pack and, stepping quietly to the river where his canoe was hidden three miles away, began his homeward journey. He paddled easily, squatting in the middle like his ancestors, and feeling a new pleasure in the steady pressure of his noiseless blade. He did not experience any particular sense of triumph, but when, six hours afterward, he saw the glint of Lake Superior around a bend in the river he laughed softly to himself.

IX.—CONCERNING THE APPREHENSION OF CLARK'S DIRECTORS

MOVE now to Philadelphia, long since linked with St. Marys by a private wire, at either end of which sat the confidential operators of the Company. The seed sown by Clark a few years ago had flourished amazingly. Instead of the austerity of Wimperley's office there was now the quiet magnificence of the Consolidated Company's financial headquarters, tenanted by a small battalion of clerks and officials. These were the metropolitan evidence of the remote activities in St. Marys.

To thousands of Pennsylvanians this office was a focal point of extreme interest. From it emanated announcements of work by which they were vitally affected, for Clark had come to Philadelphia at the psychological moment and cast his influence on those who were accredited leaders in the community. He had said that millions waited investment and he was right, for once Wimperley, Stoughton and Riggs had satisfied themselves as to the project and announced their support, money began to come in, at first in a slow trickle, but soon in a steadily increasing flood.

It was recognized that time was required to bring to fruition the various undertakings so rapidly conceived, and Clark's shareholders had in them a certain stolid deliberation, aided, perhaps, by a strain of Dutch ancestry. This kept money moving in a steady stream

THE RAPIDS

and in the desired direction. From Philadelphia the attraction spread to outside points. It was noticeable that, with the exception of Pennsylvania, other States did not evidence any appreciable interest. The thing was a Philadelphia enterprise, and to this city from neighboring villages came a growing demand for stock.

Four years before this, St. Marys was practically unknown in Philadelphia, but now at thousands of breakfast tables the morning papers were hurriedly turned over in search of the closing quotation of Clark's various companies. These began to increase in number, and there commenced that gigantic pyramid in which the various stories were interdependent and dovetailed with all the art of the financial expert. Daily, it might be said, the interest grew, until it seemed that the potent voice of the rapids had leapt above the intervening leagues and its dull vibrations were booming in the ears of thousands.

Moving in the procession was one whose training did not permit of wholesale surrender to the cause. Wimperley was a railway man and had, in consequence, a keen eye for results. His normal condition of mind was one in which he balanced operating costs against traffic returns and analyzed the results. And Wimperley was getting anxious. The profits from the pulp mill, for there were profits, had gone straight into other undertakings, and the god of construction who reigned at St. Marys demanded still further offerings. This was why Wimperley had persuaded Birch, one of the keenest and most cold blooded financial men in the city, to come on the board. Birch, he reckoned, would

APPREHENSION OF CLARK'S DIRECTORS

be the necessary balance-wheel, and it was safe betting that he would not yield to the mesmeric influence of the man in St. Marys. Now Stoughton and Riggs and Birch had met him in the Consolidated office, and through a pale, gray haze of cigar smoke Wimperley spoke that which was in his mind.

"The thing is going too fast," he concluded. "My God! How much money has that man spent?"

Birch fingered a straggling beard. He was a tall man, lean and silent, with a tight mouth, pallid cheeks and cold eyes. It was a face he had never been caught napping, and his was one of those fortunes which are acquired in secrecy. He was neither companionable nor magnetic but he was obviously shrewd and astute and created a sense of confidence which though chilling, was none the less reassuring. Birch, like the others, had met Clark, but now he shut the vision of those remarkable eyes out of his mind.

"Seven millions and a half up to last Saturday."

Stoughton made a thick lump in his throat. He knew it was something over seven millions, but the figures sounded differently as Birch spoke them. Then Wimperley's voice came in.

"Had a letter yesterday. Clark wants to build a railway."

"Why?" squeaked Riggs.

"To bring down pulp wood from new areas which are not on the river. He wants to open up the country generally — says it is full of natural resources."

"Is there any dividend in sight?" demanded Stoughton bluntly.

THE RAPIDS

Followed a little silence and the long thin fingers of Birch began an intermittent tap on the polished table. Presently Wimperley glanced up and smiled dryly. He had not known that Birch understood the Morse code. "Birch has told you," he said.

Stoughton and the rest looked puzzled.

"We can't pay a dividend if we let Clark build this railway."

"Then why build it?"

"Clark claims it is necessary to secure a dependable supply of spruce for the pulp mills, and hard wood for the veneer works. He reckons it will cost two million, and says the Government will help — but perhaps they won't." He broke off rather red in the face.

"Do any of you fellows remember Marsham?" put in Birch quietly.

Stoughton looked up. "Only too well, what about him?"

"Well, you know he's been gunning for me for years since that Alabama scrap in which he got knocked out. Now he's gunning for all of us."

"Why?" demanded Wimperley.

"Because I have the present privilege of being associated with you. I had it privately from perfectly reliable sources. Marsham's looking for a hole in the Consolidated, and if he finds one he's going to get busy and you know what that means. So far we're all right because we've got the Dutch farmer behind us and his money is coming in, in a good steady trickle. It's our job to keep it trickling till we get out of the woods into which our prophet has led us."

APPREHENSION OF CLARK'S DIRECTORS

Wimperley nodded gravely. "That sounds good to me. But I've got something else in my mind."

"Well," snapped Birch, "spit it out."

"I've got to go back a bit to a day you'll all remember, except you, Birch."

"The day of hypnosis?" suggested Stoughton.

"I guess it was, if you like to put it that way. We were satisfied with what Clark told us and what we afterwards saw for ourselves, and we found him three millions, then another and another and so on. Now, as it stands and as it goes, I don't see any end to this thing. It's like throwing money into the rapids at St. Marys — a fresh sweep of water comes and carries it away. You see it glint for a moment and there's apparently no bottom to the river. The trouble with Clark is that he is not equipped with brakes. He can't stop. He's always the roof on one station and, at the same time, contracting for another one still further on. We've got to do the braking, that's all." He turned to Kiggs, "How about it?"

"Well," said the little man out of the corner of his mouth. "It's our funeral just as much as Clark's. Why didn't we apply the brakes long ago?"

"You know as well as I do."

"I'm damned if I do."

"It's just because we're better business men in Philadelphia than we are when we get to St. Marys," grunted Stoughton reflectively. "We're outside the charmed circle down here, but when we get up there," he waved his hand, while the end of his cigar glowed like a miniature volcano, "we get locoed, the whole bunch of us."

THE RAPIDS

"And yet," said Birch reflectively, "there's nothing the matter."

Wimperley leaned forward. "Go on."

"It's simple enough, we're not using Clark properly."

"Isn't seven millions proper?" boomed Stoughton.

"You don't get me," Birch spoke in a thin dry voice totally devoid of any emphasis. "The proper use of a man like that is the purpose for which nature designed him. He's an originator — but not an executive. Dividends don't interest him half as much as the foundations of a new mill."

Wimperley shook his head. "That may be all right, but from my point of view he has become dangerous. He surmounts our resolutions, the ones we make when our pulse is normal. I have never seen him fail to carry his point. Take the matter of this railway. I don't mind betting that if we go up there to-morrow to kill that road we'll be committed to it in twenty-four hours."

"I'll take that for a thousand." There was a spot of faint color in Birch's hollow cheeks.

Wimperley laughed. "I'm on. What about lunch and finish this afterwards?"

But Stoughton sat tight. "You'll go too far. Suppose that Clark gets on his ear and tells us to run the thing in our own way, and that he'll get out. As I see it, he holds the works together and represents the works in the mind of every one who knows him."

"Well, what if he does drop out? There's no living man who can't be replaced."

APPREHENSION OF CLARK'S DIRECTORS

"Except one called Robert Fisher Clark. As a first consequence our stocks drop on the Philadelphia exchange like a wet sponge. You can imagine the rest — you all know enough about the market, and, by the way, does any one happen to remember the various things we have publicly said about that same individual?"

This was food for thought. Wimperley, dismissing the idea of lunch, sat down. The group became universally reflective, and for a little while no one spoke. Stoughton threw away his cigar, rested his chin on his hand and stared at the model of the pulp mill on Wimperley's desk. Wimperley's eyes wandered to the big map and again he saw Clark's finger sliding over its glazed surface. Riggs twisted his handkerchief with a puzzled look in his bright eyes, and Birch leaned back, stretching his long legs, while his tremulous lids began to flicker and his lips moved inaudibly. To each man there seemed to come the rumble of the mills, the wet grind of the huge stones against the snowy billets of spruce, and behind it all the deep tones of the rapids. Presently the voicelessness of Birch found speech.

"As I said there's nothing to worry about — yet. Two of us might go up next week. I'll be one, if you like — and put the brakes on — but not so that he'll feel them. If we only get out of the coach and take the driver's seat the thing will be all right. Trouble is we've sat too long inside and wondered where we were. Wimperley is right. And don't forget that Clark has something at stake too."

THE RAPIDS

It was all so even and sane that it acted like oil on troubled waters. Stoughton jumped up, remarking that now he could eat, while Riggs, remembering that six per cent. on seven millions of issued bonds was four hundred and twenty thousand, stared at Birch and marveled how he could have managed to put it away in the face of such expenditure. Just as he was reaching for his hat, the door opened and a telegram was brought in. Wimperley took it carelessly. He was too full of relief to be interested in anything else and experienced a gratified glow in that he had spoken what was in his mind and been upheld. Then, glancing at the telegram, his face changed and he felt his temples reddened. The message was from Clark, who now asked that serious consideration be given to the building of blast furnaces at St. Marys. He stood for a moment while the others glanced at him curiously.

"What about that?" he jerked out, and gave the yellow sheet to Birch.

Birch read it aloud slowly, and, after an impressive pause read it again and still more slowly, the pink spots on his cheeks becoming brighter, his hard dry tones still more cold and mechanical. When he looked up Stoughton had turned his back and, with shoulders up, was staring out of the window. Riggs was red and flustered. After a moment the little man found breath.

"He's crazy, that's all."

"Well, Wimperley?" Birch had not moved.

"This is the last straw. It's a case of our getting rid of him before he gets rid of us, or the shareholders do."

APPREHENSION OF CLARK'S DIRECTORS

Birch turned to the window. "Well, what about it?"

Stoughton hunched his shoulders still higher. "Fire him," he said stolidly, then puffed his cheeks and breathed on the widow pane. In the fog he wrote "Fire him" with his forefinger, taking particular care to make it legible with neatly formed letters. The next moment both fog and words evaporated. It flashed into Stoughton's mind that they had not lasted long. He swung round, "It's the only thing to do, but I don't want the job. You can have it, Birch."

The lean face changed not a whit. "I take my end of it. If I don't, Marsham will."

"Look here, this isn't a one man job." Wimperley's voice had barely regained its steadiness. "This message settles, as I take it, our views of Clark. God knows we don't question anything but his suitability for his position at the present stage of affairs. He's got to be told the inevitable and we've all got to go up. There's no other way out of it. We'll give him one or two of the smaller companies to run and the public needn't know anything about it. I remember the point you made, Stoughton. It's a good one and we've got to look out for it."

But Stoughton did not move. "I'll be damned," he said softly, still staring at the roof lines of Philadelphia. "Blast furnaces!"

"You will, if you don't come up with us," replied Birch acidly.

"I suppose I will. When do we go?"

"Will a week from to-day suit?"

THE RAPIDS

They all made it suit. After a contemplative moment Riggs asked:

"Will you let him know, Wimperley, and just what do you propose to say? You'll remember there have been other times when we contemplated putting the brakes on, but we all got galvanized and the thing didn't work."

"I'd merely say that we four are coming up — that's all."

Stoughton grinned a formidable grin in which there was a show of teeth and an outhrust jaw.

"That's enough, he'll know."

They went off together, but rather silently, to lunch. On the way to the street Stoughton asserted several times aloud, and with complete conviction, that he would be damned, while the rest began to experience a carefully concealed regret for the victim of their mission. At the club they sat aimlessly and played with their food, conscious that they were observed and known by all as the insiders in one of Philadelphia's largest investments. Then, too, they learned that that morning the stock of the Consolidated companies had leaped forward in one of those unexpected boosts for which it was noted. Wimperley and the rest of them had never gambled in it, but time and time again it moved as though animated by the spread of secret and definite information. Just as they were about to rise Birch leaned forward and began to arrange pepper pots and salt cellars in a semi-symmetrical design.

"This," he said, "is all right and that, and that. These are out of the question. You get me?"

APPREHENSION OF CLARK'S DIRECTORS

The others nodded.

"No blast furnaces," he went on almost inaudibly. "No railway — no further capital expenditure — and then we reach the melon of dividend," here he touched his untasted cantaloupe.

Now, just at this moment, Wimperley nodded energetically and laughed outright, whereupon a man whose name was Marsham, who sat at an adjoining table, turned — for Wimperley did not often laugh — and saw Birch's long finger resting on the melon, and, since Marsham was, without the knowledge of the others, one of the largest operators in Consolidated stock, that stock took a further jump just half an hour later, and all through Pennsylvania there were farmers, mechanics, country doctors and storekeepers who read the news and rejoiced exceedingly thereat.

The others went their way, and Wimperley walked back to his office immersed in profound contemplation. Feelings of personal injury were mixed with those of apprehension. How would the affair proceed after Clark had taken with him his unrivaled and intimate knowledge of the works; for, and in spite of all the dictates of prudence, it seemed impossible to think of the vast enterprise at St. Marys without its central pivot.

X.—CUPIDITY VS. LOYALTY

AND all this time the chief constable of St. Marys was speculating in property with steadily increasing success. So crafty was he that few people in the town knew it. When the fourth year of Clark's régime was completed, Manson had made profits that astonished him. His purchases covered both farm and town lands, and amongst the latter was a mortgage on the vine clad cottage of Fisette. But not a man in his circle would have guessed that what prompted the acquisition of the Fisette mortgage was Manson's remembrance of a friendly joke about a Unitarian wolf; a joke which still lived and set up a minute but unceasing irritation. Now, at any time, Manson might be in a position to teach the bishop a lesson.

It fell on a day that he was at the head of the old portage leading round the rapids. Here he had recently acquired an option on a considerable acreage, calculating that before long a new town would spring up in the shadow of the works, and, just as he pushed through the underbrush and came out on the gravel beach, he caught the flash of a paddle a mile away. He was hot and breathless and, lighting his big pipe, sat in the shade, his ruminative eye on the fast approaching canoe. Twenty minutes later it touched the shore, and Fisette, leaning forward on the thwarts, surveyed him with black and lustrous eyes.

Manson nodded. He did not speak at once. It

CUPIDITY VS. LOYALTY

was palpable that Fisette had been prospecting, and always in the north country the returning prospector brings with him a peculiar fascination. He is the herald of the hitherto unknown. It was also understood that Fisette was working for Clark.

The halfbreed brought the side of his canoe delicately against the sand and, stepping lightly out, began to unload, greeting Manson with a low-voiced "Good morning." Ax, paddles, dunnage bag, shed tent, these he laid neatly and, last of all, a small sack of samples, the weight of which, however he disguised it, swelled the veins in his temples. He was stooping to swing this on his shoulders when Manson spoke.

"Sit down a minute and have a smoke."

Fisette did not want to sit down. There was that in the sack and in his brain which he greatly desired to evacuate in the proper place and at the earliest possible moment. But a little reflection demonstrated that undue haste would be suspicious. Inwardly disturbed at the sight and manner of Manson, he laid the sack gently down. There came the slightest creak of metallic fragments.

"Had a good trip?" hazarded the big man carelessly.

"Pretty fair."

"Pretty rough country up there?" Manson waved his arm northwest.

Fisette grunted. "About the same over there." He glanced into the northeast.

"Been rooting about for over a year now, haven't you?"

THE RAPIDS

The halfbreed grinned. "Since I was so high." He indicated a stature of two feet.

"Come far this time?"

There was a little pause while Fisette sheared thin shavings of tobacco from a dog-eared plug. He rolled them into a ball between his tawny palms, thoughtfully unpicked the ball, re-rolled it more loosely, abstracted a match from the inside band of his tattered hat and began to suck wetly at a gurgling pipe. "What's that?" he said presently.

"I asked you did you come far?"

"Guess not so far as it seemed. Pretty bad bush."

Manson hesitated, then, in a flash, saw through the breed's assumption of indifference. Clark had been looking for iron for more than a year. All St. Marys knew that. Now, glancing covertly at the angular projectings of the bulging sack, the constable jumped to his conclusion. Fisette had found it and was on his way to report and prove the discovery.

"I often wonder," he remarked casually, "what keeps you fellows going. I never met a prospector yet who gave in that he was licked, and mighty few of them found anything. They always claim they would have had it if they could have stayed out a bit longer. Take iron, for instance. Fellows have gone out after iron for years right from here and they all thought they had it, but they didn't. There was Joe Lalonde and Pete Nanoosh and the rest of them. Same story over again. There's no iron here anyway. The country rock is wrong — a mining engineer told me that."

Fisette did not move nor did his expression change.

CUPIDITY VS. LOYALTY

His insides seemed on fire. He would have given much to be on his way to Clark's office, but something in his Indian blood whispered warningly. Moments passed. Presently he got up a little stiffly.

"I guess I'll go now."

Manson yawned. "All right, I'm going that way myself."

Sudden irresolution appeared on the brown face. "Oh, well, I guess there's no hurry." He sat down and took out his last match.

The big man chuckled. "Look here, Fisette, I suppose you know I've been buying property around town?"

"So?"

"Yes, and the other day I bought a thousand-dollar mortgage. It's the one on your land. I guess you remember it?"

A sense of uncertainty fell over the half-breed. He knew that he owed a thousand dollars and had owed it for years. Every six months he paid thirty dollars to a lawyer and forgot all about it for the next six. To his mind the document with the seals, beside one of which he had traced a painful signature, was a forbidding thing, typical of the authority of pale faces over brown. Then, quite suddenly, he remembered that next year he would have to pay off the whole thousand, and, moreover, pay it to Manson.

"Is that so? I guess you're quite a rich man?"

Manson smiled grimly. "No, not a rich man, but —" he paused, felt very deliberately in his coat and, taking out a fat pocketbook, slowly extracted a bill.

THE RAPIDS

It was for one hundred dollars. "I'll bet you this that there is no iron within seventy-five miles of St. Marys." He smoothed the bill on his broad knee.

The halfbreed gulped. Only once before had he seen so much money in one note, and that was after he had signed the mortgage. Clark gave him fifty dollars a month and his grub, and had promised more if he succeeded. He had found iron ore. It was good enough to win the bet, but was it good enough for Clark? and if it was not good enough for Clark the mortgage would have to be met out of nothing.

"Well?" came Manson's deep voice.

Fine beads of sweat appeared on the dusky forehead. A sinewy hand crept toward the sack, but just as he touched it there arose within him something very old and vibrant and compelling. Slowly he yielded to it. He saw Clark's gray eyes and heard his magnetic voice. He distinguished his own voice given in promise. Clark had always encouraged him, no matter how often he returned empty handed, and now, looking broodingly at Manson, the halfbreed perceived the type that for centuries had defrauded his ancestors with poor bargains and glittering worthlessness. All that was good in Fisette, all the savage honor of that vanishing race whose blood flowed in his veins, all the unquestioning fidelity of his half naked forebears, rose in violent protest. He might be sold out, but not by any means would he sell out.

"Go to hell," he said thickly.

Manson laughed awkwardly, slid the bill back into the fat pocketbook, and heaved up his great bulk.

CUPIDITY VS. LOYALTY

"Come on, I haven't got a hundred dollars to throw away. I suppose you thought I was in earnest."

Fisette shook his head. Just at that moment he was harboring no suppositions, but had determined to go home without stopping at the works. He swung the sack over his shoulder.

"Go ahead."

Manson drew a long breath and stepped into the narrow trail. Behind him came the halfbreed, the neck of the sack drawn tight and its sharp contents drilling into his back. He was carrying two hundred pounds of freshly broken ore. He said nothing, but kept his black eyes fixed on the figure just in front of him. A little further on he stumbled over a root, recovered himself with a violent effort, and at that moment heard with dismay a ripping sound close behind his ear. In the next instant the load spilled on the soft earth.

Manson, twenty feet away, turned at the sound and stood staring until, his face lighting with a triumphant smile, he stepped back. He had recognized ore, and it looked like iron ore. Forgetting about Fisette, he moved nearer, his large dark eyes shining with excitement, and just then came a blinding slap. Fisette had swung the empty sack hard against his face.

"You don't come here. Stand still." The halfbreed was crouching beside the ore like a bear on its hind legs.

"Won't I?" The constable smarted with pain and charged with sudden passion. He came on, leaning a little forward, his great knotted hands twitching, his shoulders curved in a slow segment of power.

THE RAPIDS

When he was within six feet, Fisette screamed like a cat and darted at his throat.

They fought silently with bare hands. Manson, heavier than the breed by fifty pounds, was reputed one of the strongest men in the district, but he was matched with an adversary who had drawn into himself the endurance of the wilderness and the quick resiliency of the young spruce tree. Were it only a contest of sheer force, Manson had won outright. Now, as his veins swelled and his arms stiffened around Fisette's pliant body, the latter seemed to convert itself into a mass of steel springs that somehow evaded compression. With feet sinking in the soft soil, crashing through the under-growth with no words but only the heart breaking gasp of supreme effort, they fought on. Once Manson thought he had conquered as his hands, closing behind the breed's back, locked in a deadly grip, with great muscles contracted, but just as it seemed the breed's ribs must crack there came an eel-like wriggle. The constable's arms were empty and again he felt the lean brown fingers at his bull-like neck. Once more he strove for that crushing clasp and, as Fisette darted in, opened his arms wide, took the punishment of a savage blow in the face, and closing his embrace, enwrapped his enemy in a suffocating hug. It was to the death, for a brown thumb was digging into his thorax and he felt sick and giddy.

Seconds passed. The violent expansion of Fisette's chest worked palpitating beneath the great arms, and, just ere endurance reached its limit and the trees began

CUPIDITY VS. LOYALTY

to swim before Manson's eyes, his little finger touched the haft of the sheath knife that hung at Fisette's back. The touch ran through Fisette's laboring frame like fire, for he had reached the point where the world seemed dipped in blood. Slowly Manson pushed down his hand, never relaxing his titanic embrace. But the instant his fingers closed on the knife the halfbreed's back curved like a mighty bow, the thick fingers creaked, cracked and yielded, the deadly grip was burst asunder, and Manson, sick and staggering, saw Fisette free and crouching in front of him, the knife in his hand and murder in his eyes. A moment later he looked up. Fisette was sitting on his chest, and running his thumb along the razor edge of the blade. There was a little blood at the corner of his mouth and his cheek was scratched. Otherwise he was undisturbed.

"Well?" he grunted presently, staring through half-closed lids.

Manson was pumping air into a laboring breast. "I'm licked," he panted after a while.

"Say that again." The breed's eyes opened wider.

Manson said it while his soul revolted within him, but he would get Fisette later on. Then there gleamed in the breed's dark eyes a flicker of Indian fury, and Manson breathed an inarticulate prayer as the knife approached his throat, until as though from a great distance he heard a voice.

"You not going to tell any one I find iron. You swear that or I kill you here."

The constable's brain began to rock giddily. Fisette

THE RAPIDS

in his present condition would not hesitate to kill. He knew that. "I swear it," he panted unsteadily, "on my honor."

Fisette bared his white teeth. "Your honor no good. You swear by God and the Mother of God."

Manson repeated it, his breath coming more steadily. He had been near death, but as he stared at his conqueror he felt a contemptuous pity for him. Fisette had moved away and was fumbling in his pockets. Presently he looked up. "You got a match?"

Manson searched, while his relaxing muscles trembled like quicksilver. He found a match and held it out.

"Now go to hell!" said the half-breed calmly, and recommenced the ritual of smoke.

XI.—CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION, ALSO HIS DIRECTORS

THE Japanese cook pottered softly about in the square stone basement of the blockhouse, while, up above, his master sat at a table with his eyes fixed on a small mountain of blackish-gray rock. He had given orders to admit none. Fingering the pointed fragments he experienced more emotion than ever before in his kaleidoscopic life. He sat in profound contemplation of that which prehistoric and elemental fires had laid down for his use. There was in his mind no question of strangeness that it should be himself who had decided that the thing was there and must be unearthed. It was the turning of another page in the book of his own history, the beginning of that chapter which would be the most fascinating of all.

Methodically he searched his retentive brain for data about iron ore. It existed in Pennsylvania and Alabama and New York, and, nearer still, there was the great field of Northern Michigan. But in Canada there were only the distant ones of Nova Scotia. He unrolled a great geological map and pored over it, finding here, as always, the greatest fascination. Within two miles of St. Marys there was an inexhaustible supply of limestone. He stared at the map with a queer but quite inflexible consciousness that this moment was the one he had awaited for years and his faith had not betrayed him. He got up with sudden restlessness and

THE RAPIDS

stood at the window. The rapids sounded clearly, but his mind was not on them. Looking to the west he saw the sky stabbed with the red streaks of flame from converters that were yet to be, and ranks of black steel stacks and the rounded shoulders of great furnaces silhouetted against the horizon. He heard the rumble of a mill that rolled out steel rails and, over it all, perceived a canopy of smoke that drifted far out on the clear, cold waters of the lake. He remembered with a smile that his directors would shortly arrive, and worked out for their visit a program totally unlike that they had mapped out for themselves. Last of all he went to the piano and played to himself. At any rate, he reflected, he would be known as the man who created the iron and steel industry in the district of Algoma. And that was satisfying to Clark.

Still feeling strangely restless, he moved again to the window, and just then Elsie and Belding walked slowly past the blockhouse toward the tiny Hudson Bay lock. Involuntarily he tapped on the pane. They both looked up and he beckoned. When they mounted to the living room, he met them with a smile.

Elsie glanced about with intense interest. She had been there once before, but with a group of visitors. This occasion seemed more intimate. She surveyed Clark a little breathlessly and with an overwhelming sensation that here was the nerve center of this whole gigantic enterprise. Belding felt a shade awkward as he caught the glance of the gray eyes.

"Sit down and have some coffee." Clark clapped his hands softly and the Japanese cook emerged from

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

below. Presently their host began to talk with a certain comfortable ease that gave the girl a new glimpse of what the man might really be.

"The directors are coming up this week — that means more work for you, Belding."

The engineer nodded. Then the other man went on with the fluent confidence of one who knows the world. Persia, India, Russia,— he had been every where.

"But what brought you here, Mr. Clark?" put in the girl presently. Her eyes were very bright.

He turned to her: "What would you say?"

"Was it destiny?" she answered slowly.

"Yes," he replied with sudden gravity and a strange look at her bright eyes, "I think it was destiny."

Her heart beat more rapidly, and from Clark her glance moved to Belding who sat a little awkwardly. There was not more than fifteen years between them but Clark's face had that peculiarly ageless appearance which characterizes some men and lends them additional interest.

"And now you'll stay?" added Elsie.

"Don't you think there's enough to keep me?"

Belding roused himself with a chuckle but Clark went on thoughtfully.

"Do you see much change in St. Marys in the last few years?"

"Before you came," she said slowly, "it was just — just Arcadia."

"Are you sorry to say good-by to Arcadia?"

She shook her head, smiling. "Not a bit; I am glad it's over, but I remember father often talking

THE RAPIDS

about the old days long before any of us were here. First there were just the Indians, and then the Jesuit priests. They used to paddle up the Ottawa River to Lake Nipissing and then down the French River to the Georgian Bay, and so up Lake Huron round the rapids and on into Lake Superior. After them came the traders and then the Hudson Bay Company, but," she concluded a little apologetically, "you know all about that."

"Yes, I know, and now what do the people of St. Marys think about the works? Eh, Belding, what do you say?"

"They don't think very much, sir — they've got into the way of taking them for granted."

Clark laughed. "I think I know that too. But you don't take me for granted?" Here he glanced provocatively at Elsie.

The girl recovered herself with difficulty. She was only twenty-one, but beside this wizard it struck her that Belding looked immature. Clark had seized on her imagination. He was the dreamer and the prophet and as well a great builder under whose hands marvelous things took shape. Now she was filled with a sudden and delightful confusion, and Belding, watching her, remembered the night they had floated opposite the blockhouse while Clark's music drifted across the unruffled water. He felt good for his own job, but very helpless against the mesmeric fascination that the older man might exert if he would. And behind all this moved his intense loyalty and great admiration for his chief.

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

"Then St. Marys has produced all you hoped for, Mr. Clark?" said Elsie.

"I not only hoped but believed and worked." The answer was vibrant and steady. "Hope doesn't do very much nowadays without belief and work." He glanced at the piano. "Won't you play something?"

She blushed and shook her head. "No, please do yourself."

"I don't play in public and I never had a lesson in my life."

"But this isn't public," she countered; "I think it's — well — rather private."

He laughed, went to the piano and his fingers began to explore the keys. The others sat motionless. Elsie's eyes were fixed, not on Clark but on Belding, and in them was an unanswered question. The music was not anything she knew but the chords were compelling and she perceived in them that which this strange personality could not or did not put into words — his hopes, his courage, his inflexible will and the deep note of his power. Suddenly she recognized in him a lonely man. Her heart went out and her eyes filled with tears. Presently he looked over his shoulder.

"The gods are good to me to-day."

"Yes?" Her voice was very uncertain.

"I've found something for which I've been looking for years past."

Belding's brows furrowed. There was that in Clark's manner which baffled him. Elsie seemed more

THE RAPIDS

than ever dainty and desirable in this unusual setting. Had Clark seen this too?

"I'm so glad." The girl's eyes were very soft.

The two went home rather silently. Elsie seemed to be in a dream, and Belding had no words for that which now worked poisonously in his brain, but just so often as he yielded to the sharp pang of jealousy just so often did his faith in his chief rise in protest.

The engineer had seen Clark in many moods and under many circumstances. There were times when only the driving force of the man had pulled things through, and he was transformed into an agency that worked its invincible will. There was another thing. So far as Belding knew, Clark had no links, sentimental or otherwise, with the rest of the world. No whisper had come from outside regarding his past, and it was only when he himself talked that any light was thrown upon his former years. He seemed, in consequence, to be enviably free and ready for anything. Unfettered by tradition or association, he was a pendulum, balanced to swing potently in either direction. And what darkened Belding's horizon was the thought that Clark, at any moment, might swing toward Elsie Worden.

Two miles away, Fisette was at home with his children. He was tired but in no way worn out, and in his pocket was one single piece of ore kept as a souvenir. Clark's check lay safely deposited in the bank and the halfbreed's teeth gleamed when he thought of the mortgage. It was only a thousand dollars. Therese, four years and three days old, was on his knee. They were all very happy, though only Fisette

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

knew exactly why. With eyes half closed, he contentedly examined the cracks in the big iron box stove and, since the night was cool, stuffed in more wood. It was in the back of his head that he had done what so many men had failed to do, and soon, when Monsieur Clark gave the word, he would be known as the man who had found iron in Algoma.

At the big jail, halfway between Fisette and Clark, Manson sat at his desk in his little square office. He was very sore and very stiff, and however savage he might feel about his defeat he could not but admire the fierce loyalty of the halfbreed. It was what he would have liked one of his own men to do. Now, however he might ache, he had a glow in every strained joint. There was iron in Algoma and not far from St. Marys.

Deliberately he shut away all outside thoughts and put himself to this, perceiving what iron would mean to Clark, this new factor that might upset every pessimistic opinion which he himself had voiced. He sat biting at his big black mustache, till suddenly his imagination leaped clear of St. Marys and took flight to Philadelphia. What would the discovery of iron mean there? Instantly he saw a swift rise in Consolidated stock and neither Manson nor any man in St. Marys owned a share of that stock.

In two days he was on the train for Toronto, and, in three, was the owner, on margin, of two hundred thousand dollars' worth of Consolidated shares. The broker through whom he dealt looked curiously at this new customer, the only man from St. Marys who had

THE RAPIDS

evidenced any financial interest in Clark's enterprise, and, concluding that there was more in the transaction than met the eye, bought forthwith for himself. Then the two shook hands very cheerfully, the broker promising to watch Consolidated like a hawk, while Manson bulged with satisfaction. He would be known as the only man in St. Marys who had made a fortune out of Clark's undertakings and that was satisfying to Manson.

On the journey back he sat for hours staring out of the windows. He had shaken free from the drowsiness of a former existence. His eyes were open to the ease with which fortunes are made by those who do not hesitate but seize the opportunity. He thought rather compassionately of Worden, Dibbott and the rest, good natured but thick headed. What a surprise it would be for them. But not once did Manson imagine that he was trading peace for anxiety, and the even tenor of his former ways for the hectic restlessness of the speculator.

As he boarded the train he noticed that Clark's private car was at the end, and inside saw Riggs, Wimperley and the rest. They were talking very earnestly, oblivious to anything that went on outside. Manson, watching them from under the brim of his hat, felt a surge of satisfaction. He guessed the momentous news which brought them, and, late that night, as the train plunged through the wilderness, lay awake in his berth thinking of many things, while the occupants of the private car talked till they were weary and leaden-eyed of that which they must do at St. Marys.

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

They were caught up, all of them, in something greater than they. Forces had been set in motion by the amazing brain of Clark which they might modulate, but could not, in any way, entirely control. The moving finger was writing, and they could, like him, only follow its mysterious command.

The private car swung along over the clicking rail joints and the directors glanced without interest at the country they traversed. The latter part of their journey was through a wilderness, wild and unpromising. At Sudbury they saw evidence of what science and energy could do in what was not long ago unbroken forest, and what wealth lay beneath the tangled roots of spruce and tamarac, but the scene did not impress them. It was a single undertaking with a single object and vitally different from their own ramified efforts, and the desolation of the country in which it flourished only accentuated their own misgivings. They were tired before the train drew in to St. Marys and decided to discuss nothing that evening. At the works station Clark met them. He was cheerful and debonair.

"Hullo, Wimperley, glad to see you. Had a good trip? You and Stoughton are coming to the blockhouse with me. The others are at the hotel. Sorry I can't put you all up."

Birch put down his bag and held out a clammy hand. "What about it?" He shot a quick glance at Wimperley.

The president of the Consolidated shook his head. "No, no, we're not going to put you out, and besides I can't trust these fellows alone. We'll all go to the

THE RAPIDS

hotel. See you first thing in the morning. Matter of fact. Birch talked business all the time and we're dog tired."

Clark's lips pressed a shade tighter, then his eyes twinkled. Riggs, observing him closely, wondered whether he had interpreted the expression which all four were stolidly endeavoring to mask. But so cheerful was he and so apparently unconcerned with anything but their comfort, that Riggs decided a difficult moment had been safely passed. Later at the hotel he asked the others.

"Knew," said Birch acidly, "of course he knew. The very fact that we hung together told him the whole thing. However, it might just as well begin that way."

Wimperley laughed, a foolish little laugh that drew the older man's puzzled glance. "There's something ridiculous about all this," he tittered suddenly. "We're like a flock of sheep afraid of a dog. We need a ram. You'd better be the ram, Stoughton, you're the bulkiest."

Stoughton grinned, but there was no humor in it. "It's going to take a composite ram. We've got to put down our heads and bunt together. Riggs, you can snap at his heels and distract him. Good night."

They met at the works after breakfast, and Clark, in a flood of confidence, announced the program.

"I want this to be a real visit," he said cheerfully; "it's some time since you were all here together and there's a good deal to see. When you get tired let

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

me know. I've not forgotten the time I nearly froze Riggs to death."

As he turned to lead the way, Wimperley sent a swift signal to his companions. Clark was to have his head for the time being. Birch nodded approvingly. This was one method of finding out a good deal he wanted to know.

"Water lots," said Clark, waving a hand toward the bay that cut in below the rapids. On one side of it spread the works and on the other the town of St. Marys. "Channel dredged through, and docks, you see, are commenced."

"Why docks?" asked Stoughton patiently.

"We'll be shipping our own products in our own vessels before very long, I hope," came back the clear voice. "Save a lot that way,—I'll show you the figures. That's one thing I want to talk about later. Come on into the mill. Extensions are about completed."

They went through the great building whose floor seemed to palpitate delicately with hidden forces, and began to feel the slow fascination. They saw dripping logs snatched from the water by mechanical fingers that cut them to length and stripped the brown bark till the soft white wood lay round, naked and shining. They saw the wood ground implacably by giant stones and emerge from a milky bath in a thick wet sheet that slid on a hot drum and coiled itself in massive rolls. Power, controlled and manipulated, was the universal servant. The whole thing was punctuated by keen remarks from Clark, who shot out

THE RAPIDS

answers to every imaginable question with extraordinary facility. They walked up the swiftly flowing head race while the general manager pointed out its proposed expansion, and explained the pressing need for diverting more water from the rapids. As they progressed it seemed there was always more to discover. They inspected great rafts of logs, fresh from the waters of Lake Superior, then came to timber mills and machine shops. And with all Clark was supremely familiar. In the middle of it Riggs volunteered that he was tired, so they trailed back to the private office in the administration building, where Clark unrolled maps and pointed out colored areas of pulp wood which were tributary to the mills, and had been compiled from the reports of his explorers.

Suddenly Birch put out a long forefinger. "What's that?"

"That," said Clark cheerfully, "is a railway."

Birch looked puzzled. "I didn't know a road ran north from here."

"It doesn't — yet — but it's something we'll have to consider very soon to bring in pulp wood."

"Oh!" Wimperley's voice was a trifle indignant.

"It's another matter to discuss when you feel like it," went on Clark imperturbably. "The road won't cost us anything."

"Won't it? Then it will be the first thing we have touched of its kind." Wimperley tried to speak lightly.

"The Federal Government bonus will pay for one-third, the provincial bonus for another, which leaves

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

us about seven hundred thousand to take care of. There should be no difficulty in getting that out of the sale of lands we will develop. However," he added evenly, "we needn't worry about it just now. And, by the way, I had an inquiry yesterday for forty thousand horse power. Of course we haven't got it to spare, at least not at the moment. Now will you excuse me for just a moment?"

He stepped into the general office and shut the door softly behind him. Wimperley glanced inquiringly at Stoughton.

"You haven't done much ramming this morning!"

"No, I'm not just in the mood. How about you?" Stoughton turned to Birch.

The latter did not reply. His cold eyes were taking in the severe fittings of the private office, whose walls were covered with maps and blue prints. The truth was that the spell of Clark's extraordinary intelligence was beginning to fall over them once more. It was so obvious that he was the center of the whole affair, and from him there seemed to spread out into the wilderness long filaments over which there trickled an unending stream of information.

"I didn't hear 'blast furnaces' mentioned either," piped Riggs.

"Cut it out for the present. The time hasn't come, but it will." Stoughton got up and began to walk up and down. "We've got to hear all he has to say. That's the wise thing. Let him talk himself out. He can't talk for ever."

Riggs shook his head. "Can't he?"

THE RAPIDS

"No, nor any man, and be continuously to the point; and if you get a bit shaky and converted just think of dividends on seven millions. That's what we came here for. I don't care how much bluffing it costs or how many days it takes. We're here now and the only thing to do is to wait till Clark's well runs dry and then give our ultimatum. But up to that time we must do whatever he wants us to do. It's going to hurt him — that's unavoidable — it will hurt us a lot more if we don't carry our job through." All of which was a long speech for Stoughton, so he sat down and was looking defiantly truculent when Clark came in smiling.

"You fellows have had enough for to-day so I've arranged a fishing trip for this afternoon. It's a good river, only six miles out, and I own it. It's an easy drive. You leave right after lunch and won't see me again till to-morrow. Rods and things are ready, and there's a French halfbreed at the camp to cook for you. What do you say?"

The suggestion came like sudden balm in Gilead. Stoughton's face cleared. "What's your biggest fish — trout, aren't they?"

"Well," said Clark slowly, "I've never had time to fish myself, but people who come to see me like a day off. Four pounds and a half is the record so far."

It was a magic touch. Riggs and Wimperley were, like Stoughton, keen fishermen, and while Birch fished for only one prize, all felt alike that here was a surcease after a trying morning. They could pull themselves together.

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

With this reflection moving in his brain, Stoughton felt a stab of compunction.

"I wish you could come, old man," he jerked out to Clark.

"Thanks," said Clark with a curious light in his gray eyes, "but I think I'd better not."

Five hours later Wimperley sat under a spruce tree and gloated over his catch. Close by were the rest, each arranging a row of speckled beauties on the cool green moss. They had caught some forty trout, the biggest being a trifle over the record, and this was Wimperley's fish. He leaned back, feeling a long forgotten youth trickle into his veins. In front of him the stream dodged round great boulders and vanished into the woods, flecked with foam from the falls whose wash came tremulously through the wilderness. The sky overhead was translucent with the half light of sunset and he felt a delicious languor stealing over him. For three hours Stoughton, Riggs and he had fished to their hearts' content, while Birch climbed a ridge and speculated what such a forbidding country might reasonably be expected to bring forth. Close by the stream, Fisette bent beside a small fire from which came odors of fried bacon and fish that aroused in the Philadelphians a fierce and gnawing hunger. Presently they sat on a mattress of cedar and ate one of those suppers the memory of which passes not with the years. It was Riggs who spoke first, lying back on the boughs, his head on his arm, a new glow in his pale cheeks. He looked younger and rounder than he did six hours previously, and, stretching luxuriously, he experienced

THE RAPIDS

the sympathetic impulses that detach themselves from a full stomach.

"I suppose there's no way out of it?"

"None whatever," grunted Stoughton, who was lining his basket with moss and objected to being thus recalled. "What the devil has this to do with dividends?"

"Nothing, I admit, but why in thunder did we start this game anyway? Why couldn't we just take things easy and go fishing. We've all got enough."

Wimperley stretched his arms above his head in delicious fatigue. "Keep away from second causes; this is no place for them. Four years ago you were meant to go fishing to-day in this very stream. Why worry about it?"

"I'm thinking about one R. F. C.," came back Riggs reflectively, "just like the rest of you."

"Well," sounded the dry voice of Birch, "so am I. And all this is very apropos. It illustrates the general condition of affairs, especially that mess of trout you had on the moss a while ago. We're all trout, we and the shareholders. You, Wimperley, are that five pounder. We all rose to the fly of one R. F. C., and we were all landed in the back woods. There are more trout in that stream, and, if we stand for it, the fishing is still good, but I've got the sting of the fly still in my gills. Also I'm thinking about one Henry Marsham."

Stoughton nodded sagely. "That's right, but if you liked fishing, Birch, you wouldn't drag in shareholders in that churlish fashion. What about blast furnaces,

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

Riggs? We haven't heard a whisper yet. Wonder what Clark is thinking of?"

"Oh Lord!" murmured the little man, "if we only had iron!"

Fisette, who was dipping his dishes in a pot of hot water, turned his head ever so slightly. The others had either forgotten about him or concluded that their conversation was beyond a half-breed. But not a word had escaped the sharp ears of the man who moved so silently beside the fire. 'Iron!' They had iron, but apparently did not know it. Fisette felt in his pocket for the small angular fragment he always carried, and was about to hand it to Wimperley, when again he remembered Clark's command. He was to say nothing to any one. So the half-breed, with wonder in his soul, laid more wood on the fire and, squatting in the shadow of a rock, stared at the stream now shrouded in the gloom, and waited for what might come.

"But there's none in this damned country," blurted Stoughton, "so get back to Birch's picture of the shareholders on the moss."

"Trouble is I can't get away from it." Riggs' small voice was so plaintive that the others laughed, then dropped into a reverie while there came the murmur of the hidden stream and the small unceasing voices of the dusk that blend into the note which men call silence. Very softly and out of the south drifted a melodious sound.

"Six o'clock at the works," drawled Birch, snapping his watch. "Does that suggest anything?"

An hour later two buckboards drew up in front of

THE RAPIDS

the hotel and the four stepped down, a little stiff, but utterly content. As Riggs took his basket from Fisette, he coughed a little awkwardly.

"Look here, you fellows, I'm going to send my fish to R. F. C. with our compliments. It's only decent."

"Well," remarked Birch reflectively, "you might as well. It's the only compliment we're paying this trip."

A profound sleep strengthened their resolution, and when next morning Clark announced that he had arranged a trip up the lake, they acceded at once. In half an hour the company's big tug steamed out into Lake Superior, and the four, wrapped in big coats, for the water was like ice and the air chill, waited for the hour when Clark should run dry.

"You're going back this evening?" he said as the vessel rounded the long pine covered point that screened the rapids from the open lake.

Birch nodded.

"We'll get through by this afternoon. There isn't any more to show you." Clark spoke with a certain quick incisiveness and his eyes seemed unusually keen and bright.

"We've seen all we want to see."

The other man glanced at him sharply and said nothing. Then, as the big tug plowed on, the great expanse of Superior opened before them, a gigantic sheet of burnished glass edged with shadowy shores, and a long island whose soft outline seemed to float indistinctly on the unruffled water. As they steamed, Clark told them of the giant bark canoe that once came down from the lake heavy with fur, to unload at the

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

Hudson Bay store at St. Marys, and disappear as silently as they came laden with colored cotton and Crimea muskets and lead and powder. He told of lonely voyageurs and the Jesuit priests who, traveling utterly alone, penetrated these wilds with sacrificial courage, carrying the blessed Sacrament to the scattered lodges of Sioux and Huron. Then, shifting abruptly, he talked of his own coming to St. Marys and the chance talk on a train that turned his attention to that Arcadia till, as the moments passed, he himself began to take on romantic proportions and appear in the imagination of his hearers as a sort of modern voyageur, who had discovered a new commercial kingdom.

"These logs," he said abruptly, "are from our limits."

The others glanced over the tug's high bows and saw nearing them a great brown raft towed by a small puffing vessel.

"Pulp wood,—ten thousand cords there. It doesn't take long to chew it up at the rate we're going. I want to speak to Baudette."

He motioned to the bridge and the big tug drew in slowly beside its smaller brother, while he talked to a brown-faced man who leaned over the rail and answered in monosyllables, his sharp eyes taking in the group behind the general manager. The tug sheered off and put on speed, while Wimperley and the rest held their breath as they skirted the straining boom that inclosed the raft. Presently the high, sharp bow turned shoreward, steam was cut off and the tug made fast to

THE RAPIDS

the sheer side of a little buff that rose steeply out of deep water.

Clark stepped out on a narrow gang plank that just reached the land. "You fellows haven't seen this north country yet, and I'd like you to get something of it on foot. This is part of our concession secured from the provincial government and I want you to walk over just a little of it. As directors you ought to."

"Come on," said Wimperley under his breath. "It's the last chapter, he's nearly dry."

The trail was narrow and newly cut. Treading at first on smooth rock, the Philadelphians took it briskly, jumping over stones and logs and pausing now and then at vistas of the lake. They were a little short of breath when the path dipped to low ground and struck straight across a tangled ravine. Here the bush was thicker, and the air warm and moist. Gradually the four coats came off.

"Hold on a minute, Clark," panted Stoughton who was beginning to sweat.

"It's better over here, come along."

But if it was better they did not notice it. Wimperley stumbled over a root and plunged one hand up to the wrist in slimy mud. Riggs was breathing hard and his nostrils dilated, but he plugged doggedly on. Birch, now very red in the face, stepped close behind Stoughton, his cheeks stinging from the swish of branches released by the man just ahead. Stoughton, his heart pumping, was in the lead, and desperately trying to catch the steadily progressing figure of Clark. He felt almost like murder. Ten minutes more and the

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

Philadelphians had lost all traces of refinement. Wimperley's trousers were torn at the knee and his white, scratched skin showed through. Riggs had dropped coat and waistcoat beside the trail, his collar was off, his small body tired and twisted, and from his lips streamed language to which he had long been a stranger. Birch had lagged far behind but plowed on with a cold determination. He was breathing audibly through his nose, his watch chain was dangling on a cedar branch a quarter of a mile back, a sharp pain throbbed in a barked shin and his boots were full of water. Still in the lead was Stoughton, who, regardless of all else, had put down his head and was crashing heavily through the underbrush like a young bull moose answering the call of his distant and amorous mate. Clark was quite invisible. Presently the four halted. Humanity had gone its limit. Birch dragged himself up and they stared at each other with furious eyes.

"Lend me a handkerchief," panted Riggs.

Stoughton felt in his pocket, pulling one out with a cascade of pine needles, when from three hundred feet ahead came a voice:

"I'm where we stop, you fellows, come on up."

"That's just where he is." Birch's difficult speech had something in it that was almost deadly. "He's asked for it and he's going to get it right here. Come on."

They trailed slowly up, a small, bedraggled, indecent procession, lost to everything except utter weariness and a spirit of cold revenge. In Stoughton's heavy

THE RAPIDS

heart was the thought that Clark had unexpectedly made their job vastly easier than they anticipated. The latter was on a little knoll that rose roundly from the encircling bush. He seemed cool and comfortable, and this stirred them to deeper anger. His features were expressionless, save that his lips twitched ever so slightly. The Philadelphians dropped and lay limply, and there was silence for perhaps five minutes when Birch lifted a haggard face and spoke.

"Look here, Clark, I don't know the reason for this fool expedition, none of us do, but it serves well enough to lead up to the point of other fool expeditions on a larger scale."

"Yes?" said Clark with a lift in his voice.

"It does. Now I'd like to go back about four years when you said that three millions would do you. In between now and then is a long story and I haven't got breath to tell it, but to-day you've had seven and we're deeper in the woods than ever we were."

"Go ahead, I'm following you."

"The long and the short of it is that we've had enough."

"Of me?" The voice was very quiet.

"Yes, damn it, of you; that is, in your present position of general manager. You can have one or two of the subsidiary companies but not the whole darn thing, and —"

"The point is," cut in Wimperley, "that we're afraid of you. We've not paid a dividend and, as things go, there's not any likelihood that we ever will. It's not easy to talk like this, and don't think we under-

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

estimate what you've done. No other man I know of could have done it, but there's a limit to the money available in the State of Pennsylvania for this business — and we've reached it — that's all."

"And if you want to know what's upset the apple-cart," chirped Riggs with a little shiver — for they were all taking turns by now — "it's that fool proposal to build a railway through this ungodly wilderness." The little man glanced about him with visible abhorrence.

"And a blast furnace without any ore," concluded Stoughton heavily.

Clark's eyes wandered round the group while through his whole body ran a divine thrill. He had very swiftly interpreted the purpose of this official visit. The directors wanted to get rid of him but funk'd the job, and now he experienced a certain contempt for their helplessness. He had a vivid sense of the dramatic and this tramp had been carefully thought out. The opportunity was made and it was for them to use it. He drew a long breath, conscious that here was the moment which comes but seldom in the lives of men. It was only five years ago that, practically penniless, he had overheard a conversation in a train.

"Ore?" he said coolly without changing a muscle. "Why, you're sitting on five million tons of the best ore I ever saw."

A blue jay lit on a branch over his head and looked impudently down. No one spoke. Presently Wimperley scratched at the moss with his heel, bared a strip of rock and stared at it as though he had hurt it. Stough-

THE RAPIDS

ton rolled over and shot side glances at Clark, whose eyes were fixed on the jagged horizon.

"What?" whispered Riggs.

"The discovery was made some days ago by one of our own prospectors, but I could not speak definitely until the various analyses were completed. It is excellent ore and will smelt well. There is limestone within two miles of the works. The coke, of course, will have to be brought up."

"I'll be damned!" murmured Stoughton in a voice husky with reverence.

The others spoke not at all, but peered blinkingly at Clark as though his recumbent body were hiding more wonders from them. Presently Wimperley, who knew something of ore, bent stiffly forward, picked up a fragment of rock and, after a long scrutiny, nodded slowly.

"This exposure is about half a mile long," said the quiet voice. "It crops out there and there," he pointed to neighboring ridges, "and there's more beyond that, if you'd care to walk over."

But no one cared. The Philadelphians were too lost in fatigue and astonishment. After a little Riggs commandeered the rest and the four began to roll back great blankets of moss, just as Fisette had done the week before, and everywhere beneath lay iron ore. Clark watched them with a suggestive smile till, after a little, Birch sat down panting, his hands stained with soil.

"Well?" he demanded, "how about it?"

"It was something more than three years ago that the first prospector went in," commenced Clark

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

thoughtfully, "and I reported at the time that it was definitely stated by those who ought to know that there was no iron in the country. Geological maps showed the same thing, but it struck me there was too much guess work about them, so we began to make maps of our own. A month ago we got into iron formation and soon after came the discovery. I felt all along that the stuff was there, but could not say anything officially till the analyses were completed. We can lay this ore down at the workers for two dollars a ton. And now," he added in a voice that suddenly changed into sharp and rising tones, "do I get my blast furnace?"

The effect on the group was extraordinary. They had sat motionless, oblivious to fatigue and mosquitoes, while Clark spoke. Their brains were flooded with the knowledge that this meant ultimate permanence to the works. It meant rails and plates and all iron and steel products, and these were made doubly possible by the enormous reserve of power still available in the rapids at St. Marys. They glanced into the woods as though there were still mysterious treasures waiting to be revealed at a wave of the hand of this magician.

Presently Wimperley straightened up. He had been going through a strange searching of soul while his gaze wandered from the glistening rock at his feet to Clark's keen face. He began to perceive clearly for the first time the prodigious potentiality of this man who was equally masterful in Philadelphia and the back woods. He saw to what wide scope this enterprise could expand if only this restless and prophetic spirit might be wisely steered by men of colder brains and

THE RAPIDS

more deliberate resolution. But Clark, after all, was the creator.

"Yes," he said half aloud, "you get your blast furnace."

The Philadelphians took to the homeward trail with backward glances and something of regret lest the archæan foundations of that mountain of ore might shift over night. There was no sense of fatigue now. Birch skipped over logs in wayward abandon and laughed like a schoolboy when Clark picked a heavy gold watch chain that dangled from an overhanging bush. Riggs' thin legs were being scratched by the sharp samples with which he had stuffed his trouser pockets, but he felt them not, and Stoughton's choler had given way to a profound contemplation out of which he periodically breathed the conviction that he would be damned. Wimperley was already organizing a new company — an iron corporation — and hazarding shrewd guesses as to the effect this discovery would have on the outstanding stock. The result, he concluded, would be most inspiring.

They lunched on the tug, an admirable meal, while the vessel vibrated gently and through the open port-holes came the swish of bubbling water and a flood of sunlight. Then Riggs made a little speech and they all drank Clark's health, promising him continued support and such money as he needed to make steel rails. The threatening specter of Marsham had vanished utterly.

The answer was characteristic. There was no mention of anything the speaker had contributed, but just the voicing of his unalterable faith in a country which

CLARK EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION

so far had never failed to produce whatever the industry required. It was a pleasure for him to work for directors and shareholders who had so practically demonstrated their confidence. He said this with a smile which was absolutely undecipherable, then drank their health in water which was his only drink — declined one of Wimperley's cigars, for he did not smoke — and inquired quietly if he was to get his railway as well. Whereupon he was immediately assured that he would get anything he asked for.

That evening the Philadelphians left in the private car. They were rather quiet, being caught up in contemplation of a new vision. As the train pulled out Clark waved a hand to the group on the rear platform and returned thoughtfully to the blockhouse where he began to write. The letter was to his mother. He told her that he had been too busy for correspondence of late, and had just concluded a very satisfactory and official visit from his directors. In consequence, he would now be busier than ever. He stared at his own signature for a moment, then opened a window and stood peering out toward the river. The moon was up, and he caught the snowy gleam of foam at the foot of the rapids. Their voice seemed ever clear and very triumphant that night. They sang of providence or was it destiny?

His mind turned reflectively to Elsie Worden, experiencing as yet no thrill but just a growing and satisfying attraction. All things seemed possible tonight. He had never given much thought to women, being impatient with what seemed to him their attitude

THE RAPIDS

and slight power of insight. So often the women who were esteemed most praiseworthy, were also the least intelligent, and lacked that spark which to him signified vision. In past years he had had a rooted belief that the standard wife was a burden who not only robbed one of mobility, but also demanded her portion of all moments, however individual, absorbed or tense they might be. In such circumstances there was nothing around which he could build a mental fence and call it his own.

It is possible that in such periods as these, when Clark gave himself up to taking soundings, as it were, in the sea of his destiny, he distinguished in his own nature the curious duality of sex which makes it possible for certain rare individuals to self satisfy their emotional appetites, and that it was this which had kept him single and unfettered. If he had a craving he could forthwith produce that which appeased it. He luxuriated in the revelations of his own perception. To him the inarticulate thing became vocal with possibilities. He was conscious of no unsatisfied need. And yet, for all of this, the vision of the girl, Elsie, began to blend with his thoughts.

XII.—LOVE AND DOUBT

SOME three months later Belding was walking slowly down the main street of St. Marys. He felt fagged and the sun was hot. Just as he reached the Dibbotts' white gate he heard a clear voice from behind the clump of azaleas that screened the cottage from the road.

"Come in, Mr. Belding."

He lifted the latch and saw Mrs. Dibbott in a white dress on the porch. She seemed cool and restful.

"Sit down here. My, but you look tired!"

"I am," he admitted, mopping his face.

"Then sit where you are and have some elderberry wine and cookies. They're right from the oven."

He sighed with relief and began to munch contentedly. He had not known how tired he was, and Mrs. Dibbott's cookies were famous.

"You look played out," she went on sympathetically. "How's Elsie Worden?"

"Well. But I don't see very much of her nowadays."

"Why?"

"Work." His brain was fermenting with half completed plans and calculations. He might as well lay it to that.

"Well, why don't you two get married? You will be old before your time."

THE RAPIDS

Belding shook his head. "It takes two to make a bargain."

"But it doesn't take long." Mrs. Dibbott put down her crochet work. "Don't you think your friend Mr. Clark depends just a little too much on individuals — I include himself in that?"

"Perhaps, but it didn't occur to me. At any rate we have a one man concern."

"And if anything happened to him, what then?" Mrs. Dibbott's eyes were bright with inquiry. "And suppose you break down, what about Elsie?"

"Elsie wouldn't be affected," he said slowly.

"Then you two are not engaged?"

"I thought we would be by this time but I guessed wrong."

Mrs. Dibbott was full of sympathy. "I suppose it serves me right for poking my nose into other people's business. My, but I'm sorry! What's the matter with Elsie?"

"Nothing."

"Then with you?"

"Nothing."

"May an old woman make a fool of herself?"

"Please — but it won't be that."

"Then has Elsie found some one else — if you don't mind my asking?"

"Possibly, — I can't say."

"But you're the only man in town who takes her anywhere. The judge is fond of you, he told me so, and Mrs. Worden thinks you are the whole world. What's the matter, Jimmy?"

LOVE AND DOUBT

Belding got rather red. "I'm afraid I can't say."

Mrs. Dibbott's eyebrows went up, then she leaned over and patted his hand. "Whoever it is you'll knock him out. Sorry I did make a fool of myself, but it's my fixed belief that you come first with Elsie, though perhaps she doesn't know it."

Belding laughed in spite of himself. "She certainly doesn't know it yet."

"Now tell me about the iron works."

"It will be a couple of years before they are finished." Belding's brain began to throb once more. In imagination he was putting up blast furnaces.

"It will mean a good deal for the town, won't it?"

He nodded. "The biggest thing yet — St. Marys is all right now."

"And it was that dirty old Fisette who found the mine?"

Belding chuckled. "He's not old nor dirty, and was the best prospector of the lot. Yes, he found it."

"Goodness! were there many of them?"

"About twenty. They all worked in different districts and knew nothing about each other."

"Then that's what brought that special train load up from Philadelphia?"

"I suppose so. They seemed very happy when they left."

Mrs. Dibbott poured out some more elderberry wine. "When I think what that man has done just out of water, it makes me gasp. I switch on the light and don't trim any more lamp wicks, and the well's gone dry and I don't care, and Mr. Filmer told me last night

THE RAPIDS

there are eight thousand more people in St. Mary's. Do you remember that meeting?"

"Every word of it."

"And Mr. Manson — he was a wet blanket, wasn't he?"

"But he was snowed under, fortunately."

"I know he was, but did you hear that he has made a fortune out of real estate, and is going round with a face as long as his back?"

Belding knew nothing about Manson — he had been too busy.

"Every one says he's in the dumps because he sold out just before Fisette found that mine and real estate has been jumping ever since."

"But he never believed in Mr. Clark."

"Some of him does and some of him doesn't," said Mrs. Dibbott sagely.

"How much did he make?" Belding was wiser with other people's money than with his own.

"They say twenty-five thousand and," she added enigmatically, "I'm sorry for his wife."

The engineer laughed, said good-by and turned toward the Worden house.

At the sound of his step in the garden Elsie looked up, a provocative smile on her face. She was so dainty, so desirable, that he felt a swift hunger throbbing even to his finger tips. She made room for him on the bench.

"I'm for Mother Earth." He stretched himself at her feet. "Where have you been lately, we've missed you at the works."

LOVE AND DOUBT

"I've just got back, been away for two weeks. Are you still very busy?"

He nodded, but business was not what he wanted to talk about. It was more than two years now since they first met and he had a feeling that all that time he had been an open book to her bright eyes.

"Don't let us talk business," he said a little unsteadily.

She swung her large straw hat by its silk ribbons. "You shall choose your own subject."

"It isn't business, it's you," he went on bluntly. "I've tried to tell you before but you wouldn't let me."

"It's a heavenly evening for a proposal."

"Do you mean that?" he gasped.

"Why shouldn't I? The moon is just coming up and the river is quiet and we can hear the rapids, and here you are at my feet. What more could a girl ask?"

Something twitched at Belding's fancy. "Then I love you and I want you desperately and I'll take care of you all my life. Is there any one else?"

His voice sobered her. "Don't, you mustn't say it like that, it sounds too real."

"But it is real," he protested, "the most real thing I ever said."

"You mustn't," she answered a little shakily. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have gone on like that."

Belding captured her hand. "I'm glad you did, Elsie, it was just right."

"But I didn't mean it," she said pitifully, "and it wasn't fair of me. I didn't know you felt like that."

THE RAPIDS

Belding stared at her astonished. "You must have known."

"Then possibly I did,—I wasn't sure. I—I didn't think of it much, but, Jimmy, I don't want to be married just now. You've been splendid ever since we met—and really I didn't want you to say what you did."

"Perhaps not in the way I said it." Belding's face became suddenly rigid. "And perhaps now I know why. You see it's hard for me to compete with my own chief," he added grimly.

"That's not fair," she burst out, her cheeks flaming. "If you really cared you wouldn't say it."

"I only want to know where I stand," he replied with sudden dignity. "If you'll tell me that, I will be satisfied—for to-night."

Her mood changed in a flash. "That sounds better, but, Jimmy, must you know to-night? It's hard for me to tell you."

"Why?" he demanded. He wanted his answer, fraught with whatever fate.

"Because I don't just know myself," she said softly. "I wonder if I can explain. I am fond of you, Jimmy, more than you know, but I want to be fair to you and I want to be fair to myself as well. Have you never been in a state in which you were conscious that the world was full of things you had dreamed of but never expected to find actually?"

He stared at her with the swift intuition that there had been a season not long ago when he felt just like this. But now he was getting used to it.

LOVE AND DOUBT

"Yes," his voice was quite steady, "I know what you mean."

"It's that way with me now, and I'm just finding out about myself." Her eyes were fixed on the white line of the rapids. "I don't know what sort of a woman I'm going to be,—that sounds queer but it's true. I'm going to want something more than love," she added under her breath.

Belding did not stir and there drifted down to them the deep, hollow monotone that pervades St. Marys when the wind comes in from the west. The young man scanned the innumerable lights beside the rapids,—he could place each one of them. Then slowly the moon came up with a soft gleam that laid a silver path across the river and touched the girl into an unearthly beauty.

"I want you, Elsie," he pleaded.

She looked at him with eyes like stars. "Perhaps I want you, Jimmy," she breathed, "but I don't know yet. Supposing I said 'yes' and then it was all wrong — for each of us?"

"You said you asked for more than love; perhaps I have no more — in your mind."

Clark's name was hammering in his brain, but he kept it down.

Followed a little silence. "Do you want to do something for me?" she said presently. Her lips were tremulous.

"I've always wanted that."

"Then give me time to find myself — I'm trying hard now."

THE RAPIDS

Belding moved restlessly. "I'm afraid that some one else will find you."

She glanced at him startled. "If that happens, Jimmy, it means that I haven't spoiled your life."

"I want you to spoil it."

"You haven't answered my question; will you give me time?"

Belding got up, put his hands on her slim straight shoulders and stared into the beautiful, troubled face.

"Elsie, if any one else does come between us —"

She was seized with strange and sudden fear. "No, no, you don't know what you are saying."

He relented instantly. "I'm sorry, I was talking nonsense. Now I've got to go and see the bishop about the new church — won't you come?"

The shadow passed from her eyes. "Yes, I'd love to see him, if you won't get on that subject again."

"What subject?"

"You know," she laughed, once more light hearted.

"I promise, but for to-day only."

They walked slowly down the long straight street that led past Filmer's house, which was surrounded by trees, and reached the corner where Fisette's cottage marked the turn up to the bishop's residence. Fisette was on his front doorstep with small people around him, and waved gayly as they passed.

"He's very happy now, isn't he?" said Elsie.

Belding nodded. He found it hard to join in the happiness of another man whose children's arms were about his neck. Elsie's eyes turned to the figure of the bishop, who was on his wide veranda, a large straw

LOVE AND DOUBT

hat on the back of his head. Manuscript lay on the floor beside him but at the moment he was absorbed in a large green leaf that spread across his knees. It was piled with strawberries. As the gate clicked he signaled hospitably.

"Come along, children — just in time. Mr. Belding, can you pick fruit by moonlight? Elsie, come here and talk to me. To tell the truth I wasn't thinking just now of any of my flock, but I'd much sooner see a lamb like you than some of the old ewes who will always insist on being serious and respectful. What you observe on the floor is a book I would have written if I'd not been a bishop." He rambled on till Belding reappeared with a hat full of berries.

"Here they are, sir, and I've got another offering as well."

"You don't say so, what is it?"

"Do you remember, a year or so ago, talking to me about a pro-cathedral?"

"Very distinctly. But I was afraid that the press of work had made the thing impossible so far as you were concerned, so I let the matter stand."

"Well, it isn't impossible, and that church is going to be built."

The bishop drew a long breath. "I am delighted to hear it, because I haven't got any money yet. It has all gone in salaries of missionaries, and your friend Mr. Clark has put me to a lot of extra expense. I knew he would the minute I saw him."

"But this church," said Belding with a little lift in his voice, "is going to be built without money. Peter-

THE RAPIDS

son, the masonry contractor at the works, will give the stone, and his masons will donate the labor. Borthwick, another contractor, will give the lumber and his carpenters will put it together. Windows — plain glass of course — and the various fittings are all taken care of by different people, and there was just one thing I found a little difficult, and now that's all right."

"And what was it?" The bishop was leaning forward, his large, expressive eyes very bright.

"Cement, sir. No one seemed to have any to spare. Finally I went to Ryan — I don't know whether he has met you."

"Yes, an excellent type — one of my own countrymen. I like Ryan, a strong Romanist, isn't he?"

"Yes, but finally I ran him down and told him I wanted enough cement to build a Protestant church."

"But —"

"But, listen! Ryan thought it over for a minute, then his eyes began to twinkle and he pointed to his storehouse and said that if it would cement the Protestant church together I might take the pile."

Elsie laughed, while the bishop relapsed into deep body-shaking mirth.

"Splendid! Fine chap that Ryan. He's from Maynooth and I'm from Lurgan and who says the Irish don't hang together? So it's all settled?"

"Yes, when can we start work?"

"At once if it's possible. How long will it take?"

"Three months would finish it. The job will be swarming with men."

"Good, and we hope that Ryan's cement will hold

LOVE AND DOUBT

the church together. I'm reminded of another Romanist friend who was approached for a similar Protestant object. He wouldn't help to build the new church but he did contribute toward tearing down the old one. And now," here this good and kindly man paused and looked affectionately at the two young people beside him, "it's my turn to make a suggestion."

Elsie glanced up with uncomfortable intelligence.

"I'd like the first wedding in the new church to be yours if possible. And if you like, I'll officiate myself." He patted the girl's hand softly.

"That's dear of you," she stammered, "but — it's a long way off."

The bishop looked up sharply and saw that Belding's eyes were fixed on Fisette's cottage. "By the way, how's my friend Mr. Clark?" he put in hastily.

Belding smiled, "Working too hard, as usual."

"And working every one else, especially you. Well, I assume that's his way. I'd like you to tell him that we're building a new church because he did not seem to care for the other one."

"Does that fall within the office of an engineer?" said Belding doubtfully.

"Unquestionably. Your profession does many different things by many different methods. By the way, I hear we are to have iron works in St. Marys."

"Yes, thank's to Fisette."

"It's some years since Mr. Clark told me he had reason to believe there was iron in the district. Now I hope that this prophet will have honor in his own country."

THE RAPIDS

A few minutes later the young people rose to go. The bishop followed them to the gate, and Elsie felt the benediction of his kiss on her forehead. He watched them from his veranda till, with something of a sigh, he collected the manuscript at his feet, put it away and turned to next Sunday's sermon. He looked at this thoughtfully, then walking slowly into his study laid it also away. His face was suddenly careworn. He felt unduly oppressed by the burdens of his office, and there came back on him, as it often did, like a flood, the consciousness that it was for him by personal effort to raise half the money needed to pay his forty missionaries. Should he fail, they went without. Constantly aware of their simple faith, he knew also that they were poorly fed and lacked any provision for old age.

Involuntarily he began to compare their lot with that of the magnetic Clark, and was confronted with an eternal problem. Why should faith and sacrificial loyalty fare so much more poorly than the mechanical and constructive nature? Clark had, apparently, the world at his feet, but what comfort and security was there for brave and spiritual souls, and for what baffling reason were they robbed of present reward?

He pondered this deeply, and, raising his troubled eyes, looked fixedly at a large print of the Sistine Madonna that hung on the study wall just opposite his desk. As he gazed at its ineffable tenderness there came to him a slow surcease of strain. Flotsam and jetsam of eternity they might all be, his missionaries and Clark and himself, but underneath were the everlasting arms, on which,— and he thanked God for this,

LOVE AND DOUBT

— some had already learned to lean. There flashed into his mind his own arrival at St. Marys, the northern center of his vast diocese; the joy with which the neighboring Indian tribes had welcomed him and the name "The Rising Sun" which they had forthwith given him. They had looked forward, they said, to his coming as to morning after the darkness of night. The reflection grew in his mind and brought with it hope and renewed courage.

XIII.—THE VOICE OF THE RAPIDS

IT fell on a morning that Clark, sitting at his desk, felt within him that strange stirring to which he had long since learned to give heed, it being his habit at such moments to leave the works and resign himself completely to these subtle processes. He now walked slowly across toward the river and seated himself where, years before, he had watched the triumphant kingfisher. The place had a peculiar fascination for him, and had by his orders been kept in its pristine wildness. Half a mile away the pulp mill was grinding dully, on the upper reaches of the great bay circular saws were ripping into logs fresh from Baudette's operations on the Magwa River, and seventy miles up the river a large crew was shipping and excavating at the iron mine. These things and many others being on foot, Clark had experienced that intellectual restlessness which in him was the precursor of further effort.

Listening to the boom of the river he reflected that the water he had diverted to his own purposes was but a fraction of the whole mighty torrent racing in front of him. Into the scant half mile between shore and shore was forced the escaping flood of the mighty Superior, and such was the compression that, midway, the torrent heaped itself up into a low ridge of broken plunging crests. Just over the ridge he could see the opposite shore line. It did not occur to him, as it

THE VOICE OF THE RAPIDS

would to many, how puny were the greatest efforts of man beside this prodigious mass. The manner of his mind was too objective. The sight of the United States so close at hand only suggested that in the country from which he came he had as yet made no physical mark. There was the town with the rapids close beside it, just as in Canada. More and more the inward stirring captured him. Why should he not create in his own land what he had already created in Canada?

The idea was stimulating, and very carefully he reviewed the situation as it there existed. His supporters were keen men in Philadelphia and the unexpected announcement of Fisette's discovery had electrified the market. Shares in all the allied companies touched hitherto unreached values. The more he thought the more he luxuriated in this new sweep of imagination, while intermittently there came to him the dull boom of blasting at the works.

Presently his mind turned to money and personal wealth. He had never given it much thought, and only seriously considered money in terms of what it could accomplish. Now he was receiving a very large salary and had, as well, holdings in shares of the various companies. He dwelt on the fact for a while, not that he had ever aimed at riches, but because his financial position was infinitely better than ever before. It would be easy, he reflected, to sell out, retire and live at ease. He chuckled audibly at the picture, realizing that if he stopped work he would die of a strangulated spirit.

THE RAPIDS

Presently as he listened it seemed that the rapids took on a new pitch. He had remarked before that, varying with the direction of the wind, their call was not always in one great thundering diapason but sometimes in a gigantic hubbub made up, as it were, of the confused blending of many notes. Now, he imagined, he could discern them all — querulous, angry, contented, pleading, defiant, threatening and triumphant, and he perceived in them but the echo of changing human moods. To-day he distinguished chiefly a voice that was dominant and imperative.

Still in profound contemplation he surveyed the rapids' gigantic sweep, the proud and tossing billows shot through with sunlight and vibrant with speed. He made out those smooth and glistening emerald cellars into which the flashing river pitched to rise again in tossing crests. He followed back through the icy depths of the great lake stretching westward to hidden swamps in that vast wilderness where these waters were born, and shouting rivers down which they poured through silent pools and over leaping cataracts to Superior. He saw still another river that, growing in power and majesty, moved royally past the cities of men, healing, sustaining and inspiring. And, last of all, he perceived these waters of half a continent blend silently with the brackish tides and lose themselves in the eternal sea.

This translation of vision moved him profoundly, for it was the nature of his remote personality to be stirred more deeply by the revelations of his own soul than by anything extraneous to its strange reactions.

THE VOICE OF THE RAPIDS

Then gradually the voice of the river resolved itself into one clear and unmistakable summons. "Use me while you may. I shall flow on forever, while you have but a moment in eternity."

And this satisfied him.

He got up and walked slowly back, plunged in thought, but not of those who passed and touched their hats and to whom he was the personification of power. There was in his mind the talk he had with Wimperley, a few months before. "We're in your hands," he had said, "but there's a limit to what we can raise. Push on with work and don't forget about dividends."

Remembering it, Clark smiled. The dividends might be delayed a year or so, but when they came it would be in a flood like the rapids. At his office he found a telegram from the purchasing agent in the United States. Blast furnaces were under way, and, he reported, he had secured an option on a rail mill. It was not new, but could be had at once. To dismantle and reërect would save six months as against the time required to build a new one. This purchase would also save hundreds of thousands of dollars.

He pondered for some time, with Wimperley's remarks about dividends keeping up an irritating onslaught. He was aware in a strange but quite unmistakable way that this decision now to be made was in a quite positive sense more momentous than appeared on the surface. He hung over it, balancing the advantages of a new mill against a definite saving. It was not the sum about which he hesitated, but a touch of uncertainty as to just how much capital Wimperley and the

THE RAPIDS

rest could actually provide. Then suddenly he decided to be economical, even though a secondhand mill had obvious weaknesses.

In the next moment he rang for Belding. The engineer answered with a weariness daily becoming more settled, and which was only relieved by the spontaneous loyalty he had from the first conceived for his chief. Of late he never entered Clark's office without anticipating some addition to burdens he had already determined were too heavy for his young shoulders. But now, too, as always, he had no sooner closed the door and caught the extraordinary power in Clark's eyes than he was caught up in the grip of his chief's confidence and felt ready for the effort.

"You know the ground on the other side of the river?"

"Yes, sir."

"I wish you would take a look over it very quietly and bring me a town map on which you have indicated the cheapest possible route for another power canal."

"Another canal!" said Belding involuntarily.

"It's important that it should be the cheapest possible," went on Clark, apparently without hearing, "and you'll have to balance up the material to be excavated by a longer route against the cost of more improved land by one that is more direct."

"How much power is required?" The question came dully.

"Not less than thirty thousand. I'm going to make carbide. At least," he added with a short laugh, "if I don't, some one else will."

THE VOICE OF THE RAPIDS

Belding drew a long breath. He had a very uncomfortable and discomfiting conviction that this man, whom he felt forced to admire, was going too fast. Around him were all the evidences that he had not gone too fast and there seemed to be unlimited support behind him. But yet —

The engineer grew very red in the face. "Do you think that's wise, sir?" he said with a tremendous effort.

Clark glanced up in astonishment and his expression grew rigid. "Just what do you mean, Belding?"

"I am sorry, sir. I know it sounds impertinent but I've a rotten feeling that things — that things —" He broke off in distress.

"I'll trouble you to finish your sentence." The voice was like ice.

"Don't misunderstand me," the young man went valiantly on. "It isn't for myself, it's for you."

"Why me?" Clark's glance softened ever so little at the thought.

"New schemes are piling up every day. We're not out of one before we're into another."

"We?" The voice had a touch of irony.

"Yes, sir, we — because I'm with you to the end, whatever that may be. I don't care if I go to smash and lose my job, but what about you? I don't want to be disrespectful, but if this company fails it's you that will have failed. I won't count except to myself. You're doing more now than ten ordinary men. Isn't there enough without that?" Belding pointed across the river.

THE RAPIDS

Then, to the young man's amazement, Clark began to laugh, not riotously but with a gradual abandonment that shook his thickset body with successive convulsions of mirth. Presently he wiped his eyes.

"Sit down, Belding, but first of all, thank you from the bottom of my heart. You make a brilliant contrast with a group I know who had to bolster themselves up for days to get courage to say something of the same kind, and they were thinking of their own skins, not mine. Now I want to tell you something."

Belding nodded. His brain was too confused for speech.

"It really doesn't matter about me. Long ago I decided that I was meant for a certain purpose in this world. I'm trying to carry it out. I may reach it here — or elsewhere, frankly I don't know. But all I do know is that there are certain things here that I was meant to tackle and this new canal is one of them. If I go to smash it was intended that I smash, and that doesn't worry me a bit. I'm not working for myself, or even in a definite way for my shareholders, but I'm trying to adapt the forces and resources of nature to the use of man. Don't you see?"

"I think so." Belding began to perceive that he was caught up as a small unit in a great forward movement that encompassed not only himself but thousands of others.

"So once again, thank you for what you said. It was a bit of a job, wasn't it?"

"The toughest thing I ever tackled."

Clark's eyes twinkled with amusement. "I know

THE VOICE OF THE RAPIDS

it. Now, remember I don't want advice and if I smash — and I really won't smash — I don't want sympathy. It's the kind of balm I've no use for. Some people are so hungry for sympathy that they forget their jobs. And, Belding! "

" Yes, sir."

" I'm going to see you through, remember that. Now make me that map, and," he concluded with a provocative drawl, " don't forget how fortunate it is for you and me that water runs down hill."

Belding's mind was in a whirl. " There's one other thing," he said, " I've promised to build a cathedral for the bishop. Peterson has given the stone and —"

" I told him to," broke in Clark; " couldn't you guess that? He spoke to me about it. But understand that neither the bishop nor any one else must know it. I told them all except Ryan, and I didn't like to tread on his religious toes."

Belding laughed. " I should have guessed it. The thing was too easy, and Ryan came up to the scratch with the rest."

In September the pro-cathedral was completed. Belding, faithful to his trust, had made almost daily visits of inspection, when he often found the bishop seated on a half-cut stone and talking with evident interest to the workmen. It seemed that the big man's presence pushed the work along at top speed. On one occasion, a few days before the opening ceremony, the engineer was watching a mason laying the machicolated coping on the tower when the trowel slipped and dropped forty feet to the ground. Instantly there

THE RAPIDS

arose a stream of profanity from the top of that sacred edifice. Came a chuckle at Belding's shoulder.

"Unquestionably the effect of Ryan's cement, but it's going to hold our church together."

Glancing down, the mason caught sight of the black coated figure. His profanity ceased abruptly

"Will you please throw me up that trowel, sir?"

The bishop laughed and the trowel gyrated skywards. "It makes me think of all that goes into the making of a church nowadays," he said thoughtfully. "By the way I wonder if my friend Mr. Clark will turn up next Sunday."

And Clark, to every one's surprise, did turn up, after most of St. Marys had seated themselves in the new oak pews. There was Dibbott, in carefully pressed light gray trousers, white waistcoat and a red flower in his buttonhole; Mrs. Dibbott in spotless linen, for the day was warm. Then the Bowers, the husband with his metropolitan manner acquired on frequent business trips to Philadelphia and converse with city capitalists, his wife in silk and a New York hat, at which Mrs. Dibbott glanced with somewhat startled eyes. Things had gone well with the Bowers. There were the Wordens, with Elsie and Belding, the latter accepting whispered congratulations on his work but wanting only a look which he could not draw from the girl beside him. Filmer was there, his black whiskers unusually glossy. He pulled at them caressingly and now and again cleared his throat, for he was to sing the tenor solo. At the door, Manson hung about till old Dibbott, glaring amiably down the isle, marched out and

THE VOICE OF THE RAPIDS

dragged the chief constable and his wife to a front seat. And last of all came Clark, who, slipping into a back corner, refused to move. Then the old bell ceased swinging in the new stone tower and the service began.

It was all very simple and touching. Milmer's melodious tenor never sounded better and the bishop's talk was straight to the point. This pro-cathedral, built out of love and faith, he told them, linked the old days with the new. The labor of many, freely given, had gone into it — here his kindly gaze dwelt for an instant on the gray-coated figure in the corner — and it augured well for the future. From this building must spread the doctrine of charity and fellowship and courage.

It was but for a few moments that he spoke, and when it was all over the old bell rang joyously as though for a wedding. Belding tried to catch Elsie's glance, but she only flushed and watched the majestic figure of the bishop retire into the little vestry. He had a despondent impression that an impalpable barrier lay between them. On the way out they met Clark and the girl's eyes brightened miraculously.

"Isn't it a charming church?" she said.

Clark nodded. "It's very pretty. St. Marys owes a good deal to Mr. Belding for this."

"He made the plans, I know, but think of all the people who gave the labor and the things to build it with."

Belding was about to blurt out that it was Clark who gave the things to build it with, but a swift signal imposed silence.

THE RAPIDS

"I know, it's excellent. You have not been at the works lately."

"I was there last week."

"And I was in Philadelphia. I'm sorry."

She said good-by and, with Belding at her side, turned homeward. Clark looked after them curiously, his eyes half closing as though to hide a question that moved in their baffling depths.

The congregation dispersed slowly with the conviction that there had been created one of those memories to which in later years the reflective mind delights to return. Quite naturally, and as they often did, Mrs. Manson and Mrs. Bowers dropped into the Dibbott house with its mistress. Dibbott was already there. He was about to start on one of his official journeys, and just now was rooting things out of a back cupboard with explosive energy.

"Well," said Mrs. Bowers, folding her large, capable hands, "wasn't it lovely?"

The rumble of a street car sounded outside. "It revives old times," Mrs. Manson said softly, "but I don't believe we've changed much. We're too bred in the bone."

"Do we want the old times back?" asked Mrs. Bowers, to whom the past years had been kind.

"For some things, yes, and for others, no. Living's a great deal more expensive, and my husband's income is just the same," put in Mrs. Dibbott after a pause. "Taxes are up, and I'm not any happier though I suppose I'm better informed. John won't sell the place though he has been offered a perfectly splendid price,

THE VOICE OF THE RAPIDS

and it's noisy — but I like it, and there's the garden. Things don't happen to me — they just happen round me."

"And you, my dear," continued Mrs. Bowers with an inquisitive glance at the chief constable's wife, "what about you? Your husband's supposed to have done better than any one except Mr. Filmer."

The little woman flushed. She was perfectly aware that Manson was credited with making his fortune, and perhaps he had. But she had no knowledge of it. For a while she knew he was dealing in property, and then one morning he told her he had sold out. Her heart leaped at the news, for Manson in the past year or so had changed. Invariably austere, he had been nevertheless kind and considerate — but soon after the real estate venture ended he became only austere, to which there was added something almost like apprehension. And this in her husband was to her of intense concern.

"I can't say," she began a little timidly. "Peter has been telling me for months he's going to resign and live at ease, but it's always a matter of waiting just a little longer. I can't help longing for the old days. Perhaps there was less comfort but —" she added pathetically, "there was also less restlessness. I suppose I'm out of date."

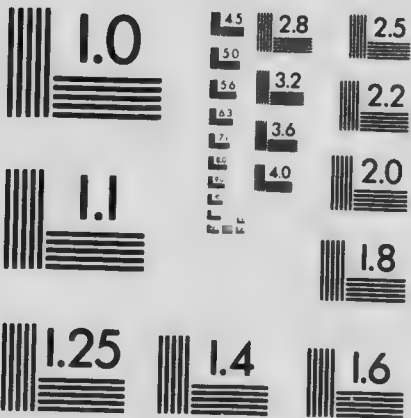
"Did you see Mr. Clark to-day?" broke in Mrs. Dibbott, changing the subject with swift intuition.

"Yes, the first time he has been in church."

"He's not interested in us," announced Mrs. Bowers, with the manner of one who delivers an axiom, "not a



(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

THE RAPIDS

little bit. St. Marys happens to be the town near the works, and we happen to be the people in it, that's all."

Mrs. Dibbott's flexible fingers curved and met. "Why should he be? We haven't done anything for him, except allow him to shoulder the town debt. And there isn't a woman alive who means anything to him, in one sense. He's in love — but with his work. There's no room for one of us, and, if he had a wife we'd only discuss her like a lot of cats. Let's be honest — you both know we would."

The others laughed and went their way, Mrs. Bowers to the big house near the station. It had a new porch and an iron fence and was freshly painted. In former days it never suggested personal resources as it did now. A little later Mrs. Manson turned into the gravel walk that led to the small stone annex of the big stone jail. Instead of going upstairs, she stopped at her husband's office and knocked, as she always did.

"Come in," boomed a deep voice.

Manson was at his desk and still in his Sunday best. He had taken the flower out of his buttonhole and laid it on a printed notice of the next assize court. She stood looking at him, their faces almost level — such was his great bulk.

"Peter," she said gravely, "I want to talk to you."

Something in her manner impressed him and he pushed back his chair. "What is it?"

"We don't seem to have much time to talk nowadays."

"There's no reason we shouldn't."

"That's just it — but we don't. Now I want to ask

THE VOICE OF THE RAPIDS

you something and, Peter, you mustn't put me off — as you always do.

"It's about ourselves," she went on, with a long breath, "but principally about you — and it concerns the children. Everything's changed and you're not what you used to be and something has come between us. I don't feel any more that we're the most important things in your life — as I used to."

He shook his head grimly. "You're all more important than ever, if you only knew it." Manson had a faint sense of injustice. It was for them he was wading through depths of anxiety. "You're shortly going to get the surprise of your life," he added with a note of triumphant conviction.

"Is it money?" she said slowly.

He nodded. "Yes, a pile of it."

"I don't want any more money, Peter, I'd sooner have you." The little woman's voice was very pleading.

"Look here, Barbara," he exploded, "I've made nearly thirty thousand dollars out of real estate. I got the money, you understand, but the game was too stiff and took too much time, so I put that and what else I could raise into stock — in Toronto. I've already made twenty thousand more, that's fifty, and the last twenty was without any effort or time on my part. I've only got to leave it alone for another year, and I'll pull out with an even hundred thousand and retire and devote the rest of my time to you and the children. Isn't that fair enough?"

"Do you say that you have already made fifty thou-

THE RAPIDS

sand dollars?" She was staring at him with startled and incredulous eyes. The sum staggered her.

"Yes," he chuckled contentedly.

She put her arms around his neck. "Then, Peter," she implored, "stop now. It's enough — it's marvelously more than I ever dreamed of. Oh! we can be so happy."

He shook his head. "I've set my mind on the even hundred. Can't you stand another year of it?"

"I can, but not you," she implored. "You don't know how you've changed. Peter, I beg you."

"I've got to leave that fifty where it is to make the next," he said with slow stubbornness. "I'll be the only man in St. Marys who was wise enough to make hay when the sun shone. You needn't be frightened for me."

"I'm frightened for myself," she answered shakily. "Won't you do what I ask? Sometimes," she ventured with delicate courage, "sometimes a woman can see furthest — though she doesn't know why."

"A year from to-day you'll thank me for sticking it out," came back Manson stolidly.

"And if it shouldn't turn out as you expect," she replied with a look that was at once sudden and profound, "you'll remember that I begged and you refused."

The door closed noiselessly behind her and Manson stared at his desk with a queer sense of discomfort. Consolidated stock had moved up buoyantly on the news of the discovery of iron, and he had established for himself with his Toronto brokers the reputation of

THE VOICE OF THE RAPIDS

a shrewd operator who worked on the strength of inside information. In front of him were Toronto letters asking that his agent be kept informed of developments at St. Marys. It pleased him that this had been achieved outside his own town and without its knowledge, and he saw himself a man who was vastly underestimated by his fellow citizens. But in spite of it all he was daily more conscious of a worm of uncertainty that gnawed in his brain. The thing was safe, obviously and demonstrably safe. Against his thousands others had invested millions with which to buttress the whole gigantic concern. And yet —!

XIV.—AN ANCIENT ARISTOCRAT VISITS THE WORKS

ON a sunshiny day twelve miles down the river at the Indian settlement, old Chief Shingwauk, known in English as the Pine Tree, put on his best beaded caribou-skin moccasins and, motioning to his wife, moved slowly toward the shore where a small bark canoe nestled in the long reeds. A few moments later they slid silently up stream, the aged crone kneeling in the bow, a red shawl enveloping head and shoulders, her thin and bony arms wielding a narrow paddle with smooth agility. In the stern squatted Shingwauk, his dark eyes deep in thought.

Slowly they pushed up current, pausing now and again to peer unspeaking into the woods, every ancient instinct still alive, though ninety years had passed since the old man and his wife were unstrapped from the stiff board cradles in which they once swung mummy-like in long forgotten camps. Shingwauk, his broad blade winnowing the clear water, reflected that this journey had been contemplated for many months, since first he heard that strange things were being done at the big white water, and now it was well to see for himself, for the time was approaching when he would not see anything any more.

It was years since he had been at St. Marys and he was very old, so he worked up stream carefully, skirting close to the shore in the back water, hugging every point and sheering not at all into the strong current of midstream. Thus for hours the canoe floated like a

AN ARISTOCRAT VISITS THE WORKS

dry leaf in the unruffled corner of a hidden pool, and in it the ancient pair, dry themselves with the searching seasons of nearly a hundred years.

For five hours they paddled, then the last bend in the river and St. Marys lay three miles ahead. Naqua, in the bow, reached up a withered hand, caught at an overhanging branch and their old eyes took in a scene familiar but yet strange. The sky line had changed, and up where the big white water crossed the river like a flat bar there was cause for wonderment.

Presently Shingwauk tapped the thwart with the haft of his paddle and they glided on, past the lower end of the town with its new houses and gardens, past a street car that moved like a noisy miracle with nothing to pull it, being evidently animated by some devil enchanted, past Filmer's dock where years before Shingwauk and Naqua used to bring mink and otter and marten for trade; past other docks newer and larger and a town bigger than anything they had ever conceived, and opposite which sharp-nosed devil boats darted about or swung at anchor, across the deep bay that lay between the town and the big white water, till finally they floated near the block-house and Shingwauk's eyes, gazing profoundly at the massive proportions of Clark's buildings, caught the narrow stone lined entrance to the little Hudson Bay canal.

"How," he grunted.

The canoe slid delicately forward till presently it floated in the tiny lock. Naqua said nothing, being seized by an enormous fear that clutched at her stringly throat and held her silent, but Shingwauk felt some-

THE RAPIDS

thing stirring in his breast. Here, surrounded by the confused vibrations of the works, he resigned himself to ancient memories. Putting out a brown hand he touched the rough walls, and at the touch the years rolled back. He saw himself a young man, the bow paddle of a great thirty-foot canoe that came down through the broken waters of the big lake to the rapids above, with the Hudson Bay factor enthroned in the middle, surrounded by the precious takings of the winter. He saw Ojibway faces, now long forgotten, and smelt the smoke of vanished camp fires. He saw the thirty-foot canoe lowered delicately into just such a lock as this, and automatically thrust out his own paddle to protect her tender tawny sides from the rough masonry. The hewn gates had opened when he floated out, and here were the gates looking non-understandably new, and with the adze marks still on the yellow timber.

Involuntarily he cast about for the blockhouse and found it hard by. He looked at his own hands — they were knotted and wrinkled; he scanned the twelve-foot canoe — it seemed small and hastily built of poor bark; he stared at the back of Naqua and reflected how bent and rounded it was instead of being straight and strong and supple; he glanced up and where once there stretched green bush and small running streams now stood things bigger than he had ever seen; he sniffed at the wind and, without knowing what it was, caught the sharp odor of metal and machinery. Last of all, he lifted his gaze straight into the eyes of a man who stood staring down from the coping of the little lock.

AN ARISTOCRAT VISITS THE WORKS

From the blockhouse window Clark had seen him since first the canoe approached the shore. With a curious thrill he had watched the old chief enter the tiny chamber and float motionless—a visitant from the past. So complete was the picture and so almost poignant the pleasure it afforded, that, loath to mar it, he had hesitated to approach. Never had he conceived anything so intimately appropriate as this linking of bygone days with the insistent present.

They stared at each other, Clark's keen features suffused with interest, Shingwauk's black eyes gazing lustrous from a dark bronze face seamed with innumerable wrinkles. His visage was noble with the proud wisdom of the wilderness and the unnamable shadow of traditions that went back through uncounted centuries of forest life. Clark, recognizing it, felt strangely juvenile. Presently Shingwauk, with some subtle intuition of who and what was the man who stood so quietly, waved his hand. The motion took in the works, the blockhouse, the canal, in short the entire setting.

"You?" he asked in deep, hollow tones.

Clark nodded, smiling. "Yes, me."

Shingwauk's eyes rounded a little. "Big magic," he said impressively and relapsed into silence.

"Hungry?" asked Clark presently.

The old chief did not reply, being too moved by strange thoughts and the rush of memory to feel anything else, but Naqua lifted a withered head in the bow.

"Much hungry," she croaked shrilly.

Clark laughed and signaled to the blockhouse, where

THE RAPIDS

the Japanese cook waited, peering from a window. Presently the latter came out carrying a tray. His narrow eyes were expressionless as he laid it on the masonry beside the canoe. Shingwauk glanced at him, puzzled over the flat, oriental features for a moment, and looked away. He seemed but a minor spirit in this great mystery. The old woman ate greedily, but her husband had no desire for food. He was experiencing a transition so breathless that it could but mark the day of his own passing. He waited till Naqua finished such a meal as she had never seen before, his face gaunt but his eyes large and profound with the shadow of unspeakable thoughts. Presently he dipped his blade in the untroubled water, and the canoe backed out of the lock.

"Boozhoo!" he said slowly, with one long look at Clark.

"Good-by! Come again."

The penetrating gaze followed the pigmy vessel as it dipped to the larger stretch of the bay, dwindling with the glint of two blades that flashed with clock-like regularity in the afternoon sun. Soon it reduced to a speck and was out of sight. Clark turned to his office, still contemplating the dignity of his visitor, the stark simplicity of this archæan aristocrat. How soon, after all, he pondered, might not he himself and his works look aboriginal beside the achievements which science had yet to unfold to the world? Then, glancing across the river, he stepped down to the dock and struck over in a fast launch.

XV.—CLARK CONVERTS TORONTO

IT is probable that Clark's invasion of the State of Michigan made more impression on the people of St. Marys than any other of his activities, even though it came in the midst of great undertakings. Here was the definite impression of a central power that stretched octopus arms from out of their own town. Even Manson, who was recognized as the champion pessimist, seemed impressed. But St. Marys remained for the most part still inactive. The people looked on, admired the works, discussed each new development, read much about their home town in outside papers, and that was in a general way about all. They saw in Clark a constantly more arresting and suggestive figure. They had nodded approvingly when he secured a private car for the use of himself, his directors and shareholders and considered it a natural thing when it was announced that he was building upon the hill a large and expensive residence. The blockhouse, they pointed out, had long since become too small to accommodate his many and important visitors.

St. Marys had physically changed. Old streets were paved with asphalt and new ones opened. The car line that ran up to the works branched out across the railway into ground that a few years before was solid bush, but was now covered with substantial houses, occupied by a new population. Parts of old

THE RAPIDS

St. Marys were left in the lurch because the owners refused to sell, Dibbott amongst them, and Worden, whose broad river-fronting lawn was surrounded by the commercial section of the rejuvenated town. Filmer's store had been enlarged twice, and so complete was the popularity of the mayor that, with his sound business instinct, it still held place as the local emporium.

At the terminus of the car line a new town had sprung up. In Ironville dwelt the brawn and bone of the works. The place was not restful like St. Marys, but a heterogeneous collection of sprawling cabins, corner saloons and grocery stores where the food was piled on sidewalk stands and gathered to itself the smoke and grime of the works when the wind came up from the south. Here were the Poles and Hungarians and Swedes, with large and constantly increasing families, and to them the sun rose and set in pulp mills and machine shops, blast furnaces and the like. They were mostly big men and strong, who sweated all day and came back, grimy, to eat and then spend the long evenings at the corner saloons or fishing in the upper bay, or sometimes taking the car down to St. Marys, and walking about surveying the comfortable old houses and carefully kept lawns. And of Ironville, St. Marys did not think very much, save that it was dirty and unattractive and, unfortunately, quite a necessary evil.

Back in the country new farms were cleared on heavily timbered land and the farmers found instant market for all they could raise. But the bush still stretched unbroken a little further to the north, and

CLARK CONVERTS TORONTO

while Clark's engineers spent millions to harness the mighty flow of Superior, the beaver were building their dams in a tamarac swamp not five miles from the works.

All this was indissolubly linked with Philadelphia. Parties of shareholders, large and small, came up in special cars to inspect the plant. These visits were well organized. They found everything going at full blast, everything was explained by the magnetic Clark and there followed banquets at the new hotel, when both shareholders and directors spoke and Filmer voiced the sentiments and pride of the town, and the shareholders went away a little staggered by the size and potentiality of their business but determined to back Clark to the limit and carrying away with them ineffaceable impressions of his strong and hypnotic personality. It was, after all, as they said, a one man show.

Interest grew in Philadelphia, and thousands, swayed as though by the compelling voice of the rapids, plunged deeper. The discovery of iron was but one of the inviting incentives which, from time to time, stimulated support. Million after million was subscribed and sent to this man who inspired such abounding faith in himself and his gigantic plans. It may be that in one of those moments of profound insight which Clark periodically experienced, he became finally convinced that life was short and there must be, in his case at any rate, compressed into it the maximum of human effort ere the day ran out. His brain oscillated between the actual work itself and those ex-

THE RAPIDS

traneous affairs which might at some time affect it.

Amongst those to whom his attention turned was Semple, member of the provincial parliament, in whom he recognized the official voice of the district in certain regions of authority. As the works grew in size and their importance increased, Semple found himself more and more the subject of attention. It flattered him, as well it might, for at this time the Consolidated Company was the largest single undertaking in the country. It did Semple good to refer to "my constituency" with the reflection that in the midst of that wilderness was an undertaking whose capital surpassed that of the greatest railway in the Dominion. In the house of parliament he was listened to attentively, and in St. Marys his office took on a new significance. It was on one of his informal visits to the works that Clark expressed pleasure at the way in which the community was represented.

"I'm all right as far as this company is concerned," said Semple, "but you know the Liberal majority in Ontario is mighty slim — and I'm a Liberal. It's here to-day and gone to-morrow."

"Not for you," answered Clark impressively, "and you haven't had much trouble in getting what we wanted."

"No," grinned Semple, "our majority is too small. The Premier couldn't very well refuse. But," he added with a little hesitation, "opinions differ down there."

"About the works?"

Semple nodded. "Yes, and about — they're

CLARK CONVERTS TORONTO

not true believers by any means, you must understand."

Clark grunted a little. "What do they say?"

"It's more what they don't say, since they're mostly Scotch. I mean the financial crowd — most of Toronto is like that. The Scotch got their hooks in long ago and it was a good thing for the country. They reckon it should take twenty-five years to build up a concern like this — not five. You're too fast for that lot."

"Ah! Perhaps I'd better go down and see them."

Semple gazed in astonishment, then concluded he had not made the other sufficiently aware of the criticism as to himself and his affairs that was now so widely spread.

"What's the object?" he blurted; "you've got all you want."

Clark shook his head. "You don't understand me — and these people don't understand their own country,— that's all. They don't believe it because they don't know it. They've never tried to know it. To Toronto the district of Algoma is a howling wilderness where there's good fishing and shooting. You may call Canadians pioneers, but some of them are the stickiest lot imaginable. I'm an American, but I have more faith in their country than they have."

"Just what do you propose to do?"

"What would you say was the most influential body of business and financial men?"

"The Toronto Board of Trade — without question; bankers, and, by the way, the president of your bank here is the president of the Board; manufacturers,

THE RAPIDS

brokers, commission men,— oh, most every one who is worth anything."

"Then I'd better go and talk to them. There ought to be some Canadian money in this concern and there isn't a cent. The only thing we got in Canada was one hundred and thirty thousand dollars — but that was debt — St. Marys' debt —" laughed Clark. "We'll get some Canadian directors, too; I don't know but that new blood would be good for us."

"Well," hazarded Semple, "I'd like to be there."

"You will. We'll go together as soon as it's arranged. You ought to be there. They'll probably ask you to confirm what I assert." He touched a bell and a moment later said to his secretary, "See Mr. Bowers and ask him to get in touch with our Toronto solicitors at once. I want them to arrange that I address the Toronto Board of Trade as soon as convenient to that body. I'll speak of developments in Northern Ontario. You understand that this will not be a suggestion from me, but will come from them. Get the idea going in the Toronto papers. You might let it be known that a special car will leave for St. Marys the evening of the address — with the Company's guests — that's all."

The door closed and he turned again to Semple. "I'm no prophet, but I don't mind saying that a month from to-day your Conservative opposition won't be so stiff necked. Man alive! it's nothing but ignorance. This district of yours —" he added very slowly, "is a bigger, richer thing than even I imagined."

Semple went away shaking his head doubtfully. He

CLARK CONVERTS TORONTO

knew better than Clark that chilling regard with which Toronto financiers contemplated an undertaking in which they had little faith. They were a cold-nosed group, immune, he considered, to the dramatic and strangers to any sudden impulse. And Clark, to their minds, was tarred with the same brush as his undertakings. He might be big and imaginative, but he was over impetuous and haphazard.

Clark himself was disturbed by no discomfort, nor did he make any special preparations for that address, and gave it as arranged some two weeks later, and the manner and substance and effect of it will be vividly remembered by every man who was a member of that Board of Trade some twenty-five years ago. There were the bankers and the rest of them, just as Semple had said, and Clark, surveying them from the platform with steady gray eyes, knew what make of men they were and knew also that they had come there not so much with a thirst for knowledge about their own country as that they might coldly analyze him and that vast undertaking of which they had, as yet, but a fantastic and fragmentary knowledge.

It is without question that the speaker had to an infinitely greater extent than any of the men who stared at him through a blue haze of cigar smoke, a fluid mind and the capacity for instantly seizing upon a situation and determining how to meet it. He possessed as well a voice unrivaled in magnetic power and above all an unshakable faith in the potentiality of the district in which he labored, so that, estimating the mental and professional characteristics of those he

THE RAPIDS

faced, Clark began to talk in the coolest and most level way possible without any trace of flamboyant enthusiasm. Touching first of all on the development of the far West, a subject with which, since much Toronto money was involved, they were directly familiar, he diverted to St. Marys, describing Arcadia as he found it, the apparently unpromising nature of the surrounding territory and his own conclusion as to its possible future. Then the rapids became woven into his speech, the nucleus of power which made so many things possible. From this he moved into the wilderness and before his listeners there began to unroll the north country in its primeval silence, broken only by the occasional tap of a prospector's pick or the heavy crash of a moose through a cluster of saplings. And with the story of the wilderness came that of pulp wood and great areas now tributary to St. Marys. And after the pulp mills came the discovery of iron.

At this a stir went through the audience. In another part of the north country was Cobalt, that prodigious reservoir of silver, and it was realized that while Cobalt lay almost next door to Toronto, the Canadian investor had for the most part looked on incredulously, till, too late, he realized that the American had seized and acted with characteristic energy. And now the thing had happened again.

"The iron was there," went on Clark's voice with a subtle and impelling note, "and it only took a year or so to find it. The country was unexplored, that is, in a scientific manner, and no geological maps worth anything were in existence. We have proved by now not

CLARK CONVERTS TORONTO

less than fifteen million tons of excellent ore. The formation near St. Marys carries an abundance of limestone and the rapids furnish ample power. I think you will admit, gentlemen, that this is non-speculative."

Then one by one he spoke of various phases of the works. In every case the product was there—the merchantable produce—to prove the point; and the evident fact that Clark was actually selling goods over his gigantic counter, coupled with the cool confidence of the man, was all that was needed to convert an audience of critics into one of friendly believers.

He saw the change as it took place. His voice lifted a little and became that of one crying in the wilderness.

"What I have been able to do any man can do. If you don't believe in it, other people do; if you don't develop it, other people will. From Canada we have moved across to Michigan and are developing power on the south side of the river. You Canadians could have done all this. In a few months Canadian railways will be buying steel rails made of Ontario ore, but the rails will be made and sold by Americans in Ontario. Gentlemen, all I ask is that you have faith in your own country, as much faith as has been shown by your neighbors across the line. Your Dominion is now what the United States was fifty years ago and we did not waver. The capital of our allied companies is twenty-seven million dollars. It comes, every cent of it, from Philadelphia. We do not need your money, but will welcome any who wish to join us. Once again, gentlemen, and last of all, have faith in your own country!" Then, with a graceful acknowledgment of

THE RAPIDS

the assistance of Semple and the Ontario Government, he sat down.

For a moment there was silence, till came applause, moderate at first, as befitted the meeting, but swelling presently into great volume. Louder and deeper it grew while Clark sat still with the least flush on his usually colorless cheek and a keen light in his gray eyes. He had touched them to the quick, touched them not only by his own evident faith and courage, but also by his superlative energy and the inexorable comparison he had made. It was true! Cobalt was nearly lost to them, and now the iron of Algoma had passed into other hands. Old bankers and financiers cast their minds back and were surprised at the number of similar instances they recalled. And here was Clark, the protagonist, Clark the speculator, Clark the wild man from Philadelphia, demonstrating in the cold language to which they were accustomed and which they perfectly understood, that he had done the same thing over again and on a more imposing scale than ever before.

The dénouement was what he had anticipated and what invariably takes place when men with calculating and professionally critical brains are for the first time profoundly stirred by a supremely magnetic spirit that appeals not to their emotions but to those instincts in which the memory of lost opportunities is effaced by confidence in future success. There was, too, a general feeling that Clark in the past was misunderstood. They had been hard on him. It was strange for men who were daily besought to invest in this or that to be

CLARK CONVERTS TORONTO

told that their money was not asked for; that, as Clark had put in — the job was nearly done, capital expenditure nearly over and steady returns about to begin. And these returns, they reflected, would go straight out of the country to Philadelphia. All this and much more was moving through their minds when the president moved a vote of thanks which was tumultuously carried, whereupon Clark announced that the private car would leave that night for St. Marys, and that he and Mr. Semple would accompany such visitors as cared to spend a day or two at the works.

That afternoon he sent a short letter to his mother. "I have been giving a talk on Toronto — it went quite well," he wrote in closing. "Canadians do not attract, but certainly interest me. There's much underneath that needs work to discover, and I have so little time for work of that kind."

He glanced at the last sentence and nodded approvingly. Perhaps Canadians were too Scotch to be spontaneous. They were worthy, he admitted, but the word implied to him certain attributes that made life a little difficult, and, he silently concluded, a little cold. He would have desired them to be a trifle less deliberate and a shade more responsive. He felt that, however, he might persuade they would never fundamentally understand him, and perceived in this the cause of that condescension he had observed in so many Canadians toward the American. It did not worry him in the slightest as an American. He put it down to that self-satisfaction which is not infrequently acquired by self-made men in the process of their own manufacture, and

THE RAPIDS

to remnants of that cumulative British arrogance of forebears who had for centuries led the world.

Early next morning the private car swung through the mining district of Sudbury. Clark's Toronto visitors were still asleep, but he was up and dressed and on the rear platform. The district, covered once by a green blanket of trees, now seemed blasted and dead. Close by were great piles of nickel ore, from which slow clouds of acrid vapor rose into the bright air. Clark knew that the ore was being laboriously roasted in order to dissipate the sulphur it contained, prior to further treatment.

The scene, naked and forbidding, struck him forcibly, and the great mining buildings towering in the midst of the desolation they had created looked like ugly castles of destruction. He had noted the place often before, but this morning, refreshed by the incidents of the previous day, his mind was working with unexampled ease and insight. Here, he reflected, two things of value — sulphur and vegetation — were being arduously obliterated. It suddenly appeared fundamentally against nature, and whatever violated nature was, he held, fundamentally wrong.

The train stopped for a few moments and, jumping from the platform, he ran across to the nearest pile. Here he picked up several pieces of ore fresh from the mine, inhaling as he stood the sharp and killing fumes. At St. Marys he made but one kind of pulp — mechanical pulp — in which the soft wood was disintegrated by revolving stones against which it was thrust under great pressure. But he had always de-

CLARK CONVERTS TORONTO

sired to make another kind of pulp, so now he thrust the ore samples in his pocket and climbed back into the private car.

Two days later the chief chemist of the works stood beside the general manager's desk looking from the nickel samples into Clark's animated face.

"These are from Sudbury," the latter was saying, "where they waste thousands of tons of sulphur a year, and it costs them a lot to waste it. I want the sulphur to make sulphite pulp."

"Yes?" The reply was a little uncertain.

"To buy what we want is out of the question at the present price. In Alabama and Sicily they are spending a lot of money to get sulphur; in Sudbury they're spending a lot of money to get rid of it. The thing is all wrong."

"Have we any nickel mine, sir?"

"No, but that's the small end of it. I want you to analyze this ore and see if you can devise a commercial process for the separation of nickel from sulphur and save both. If you can, I'll buy a mine. Incidentally we'll produce some pretty cheap nickel. Get busy!"

The chemist nodded and went out, and Clark, glancing after him, fell into profound contemplation. He himself was neither engineer, chemist nor scientist, but had a natural instinct for the suitable uses of physical things. Thus, though without any advanced technical training, his brain was relieved from any consciousness of difficulties which might be encountered in the working out of the problems he set for others with such

THE RAPIDS

remarkable facility. He was, in truth, a practical idealist, who, ungrafted to any particular branch of effort, embarked on them all, radiating that magnetic confidence which is the chief incentive toward accomplishment.

The visit of the Toronto financiers had been a success. Clark went round with them, unfolding the history of the works. Nor was this by any means the first tour he had made with similar intent. It was now an old story with him to watch the faces of men reflect their gradual surrender to the spell of his mesmeric brain. What the Torontonians saw was physical and concrete, and, as their host talked, they perceived the promise of that still greater future which he had put before them. Here, they decided, was not a speculation, but an investment of growing proportions. Then from the works to the backwoods by the new railway, where was iron by millions of tons and pulp by millions of cords, the foundations on which were built the gigantic structures at St. Marys. So they had gone back in the glow of that sudden conversion which in its nature is more emotional than the slow march of a purely intellectual process. Clark smiled a little at the thought. He had seen it all so often before.

A little later a knock sounded at his door and Fisette entered, stepping up to the desk, one brown hand in his pocket. Clark glanced at him.

"Well, mon vieux?"

The half-breed laid on the desk half a dozen pieces of bluish gray rock. They were sharp, angular and

CLARK CONVERTS TORONTO

freshly broken. Through them ran yellow threads, and floating in their semi-translucent depths were fine yellow flakes.

"Gold," said Fisette quietly.

XVI.—GOLD, ALSO CONCERNING A GIRL

CLARK stared at the fragment of rock with a sudden and divine thrill. Gold! the *ultima thule* of the explorer. He had erected vast works to gain gold, not for himself for he desired no wealth, but for others, and here the precious thing lay in his hand. His heart leaped and the blood rushed to his temples while his eyes wandered to the impassive face of Fisette. Who and what was the breed that he could be so calm:

Out of a riot of sensations he gradually reestablished his customary clearness of vision. Here was additional evidence of the inherent wealth of the country. It was that for which men dared death and peril and hardship, and it struck him that it would be a dramatic thing to ship steel rails and pulp and gold bulion on the same day.

But for all of this he was not carried away. However great the thrill, his mind could not be diverted by the discovery of a quartz vein. He knew, too, that mining of this character was a tricky thing and that nature, as often as not, left the shelves of her storehouses empty when by all the rules of geology they ought to be laden. He would explore and develop the find, but its chief value, he ultimately decided, was psychological, and would be seen in the continued support of his followers. Presently he looked up and caught the disappointed eyes of Fisette.

COLD, ALSO CONCERNING A GIRL

"It's all right, mon vieux," he said with an encouraging smile, "and it's very good. How far from the railway?"

"About six mile." Fisette's voice was unusually dull.

"And you have it all staked and marked and dated?"

"Yes, I'm not one damn fool."

Clark laughed outright. "Of course not — but listen — you remember when you found the iron last year what I told you?"

"You told me to keep my mouth shut. I keep it."

"That's right. And now I want you to keep your mouth open."

Fisette gasped. "What you mean?"

"I mean this. You told nobody about the iron, now you go and tell everybody about the gold. Shout about it. The more you tell the better. The whole town can prospect on our concession if they want to. I hope every one of them will find gold. I'll come out myself next week and see what you've turned up, and of course you get for it what I gave you for the iron last year. Au revoir, mon vieux, and when you go to town, talk — talk — talk! But just wait a minute in the outside office."

Fisette backed silently out, his dark brow pinched into puzzled wrinkles. He had expected his patron to take the samples and stare at them and then at him with that wonderful look he remembered so well and could never forget; a look that had made the breed feel strangely proud and happy. He had often seen it since when, quite alone in the woods, he peered

THE RAPIDS

through the gray smoke of his camp fire and imagined his patron sitting just on the other side. And now he was to go into St. Marys and do nothing but talk! He shook his head doubtfully.

No sooner had the door closed than Clark summoned the superintendent of his railway department.

"Fisette has found gold out near the line. There's going to be a rush, and you'd better get ready for it. Also you'd better run up some kind of an hotel at Mile 61,—it's the jumping off place. That's all — please send Pender here."

A moment later he turned to his secretary.

"Fisette is waiting outside. Talk to him, he's found gold. Get the story and give it to the local paper. Say that I've no objection to prospectors working on our concession, and that I'll guarantee title to anything they find. Get in touch with the Toronto papers and let them have it too. That's all."

The door closed again and, with a strange feeling of restlessness, he walked over to the rapids, seating himself close to their thundering tumult. What message had the rapids for him now? And just as the voice of irresistible power began to bore into his brain he noticed a girl perched on a rock close by. Simultaneously she turned. It was Elsie Worden.

She waved a hand, and he moved carefully up stream over the slippery boulders. She looked at him with startled pleasure. It was unlike Clark to move near to any one.

"I hope I'm not trespassing."

GOLD, ALSO CONCERNING A GIRL

"No," his voice came clearly through the roar of many waters; "do you often come here?"

She smiled. "It's the most conversational place I know."

The gray eyes narrowed a little. "You have discovered that the rapids talk back?"

"They have told me all kinds of things ever since I was a child. When did you find it out?" Elsie's voice lifted a little.

"The very first day I reached St. Marys, almost the first hour." He was wondering inwardly why he should talk thus to any one.

"I'm so glad," she answered contentedly, "because they must have told you to do many things, and you've done them. But I can't half answer what they say to me."

Clark studied her silently. Her face was not only beautiful but supremely intelligent, and had, moreover, the signet of imagination. She was, he concluded, utterly truthful and courageous.

"I wonder you get time to come here at all," she hazarded after a thoughtful pause.

"It is time well spent." He pointed to the heaped crests in midstream. "The solution of many a problem lies out there; I've got one to think of now."

Had Elsie been an ordinary girl she would have disappeared forthwith, but between them sped something that convinced her that he wanted her to stay.

"Am I allowed to know what it is?"

"It's this." Clark took a fragment of rock from his pocket and laid it in her palm.

THE RAPIDS

"What is it?" she said curiously.

"Gold!"

"Oh!" The color flew to her cheeks and her eyes became very bright. "Where did it come from and who found it?"

"About sixty miles from here, and Fisette found it — he's one of my prospectors."

"He's the man who discovered iron for you?"

"Yes."

"How very extraordinary," she said under her breath.

"Why should it be?"

"The last time we talked you had just found iron, and now it's gold. This is even more wonderful, isn't it?"

He shook his head. "It's pretty — but not nearly so important." Something in the girl's manner attracted him strangely and he went on talking as he seldom talked. Her eyes never left his face.

"Yes," she said presently, "I'm glad to understand. But the strange thing to me is that all these people," here she pointed towards the works, "are doing things they would not have done if you hadn't come. Why is that?"

"Some people think that the most successful man is the one who gets others to work the hardest for him," said Clark, smiling.

She shook her head. "That doesn't suit. I know what it is."

"Do you?"

"It's vision." There was a thrill in her low voice.

GOLD, ALSO CONCERNING A GIRL

Then she added, very swiftly, "You haven't many friends, have you, Mr. Clark?"

He stared at her in surprise, and in the next instant decided that she was right. "Why do you ask that?"

"Because you must see past most people, don't you, to what is ahead? It is hard to put just what I mean into words."

He nodded gravely. "It is quite true that I haven't any very close personal friends, I've moved about too quickly to make them. As for my employees, I see them chiefly through their work."

"Then you don't really know them," she announced.

"Possibly,—but I know their results. It sounds a little inhuman, doesn't it?"

"I think I understand." Elsie was tempted to probe this gray-eyed man about Belding, but presently gave it up. She was conscious that while she was talking to Clark the figure of the engineer faded into the background.

"So there's really no one?" she went on reflectively.

"Only my mother," he said gravely, "that is, so far."

At that her heart experienced a new throb. He was infinitely removed from any man she had ever dreamed of.

"Are you never lonely?"

"Perhaps I am," he replied with utter candor, "but I fill my life with things which to most people are inanimate, though to me they are very much alive. And what about yourself?"

"I don't know." Her voice was a little unsteady.

THE RAPIDS

She had a swift conviction that Clark was essentially kind, as well as a great creator. "You want this, don't you?" She held out the piece of ore while the flakes of gold shone dully in the sun.

"Please keep it, the first bit out of what I hope will make a mine. And I hope you will have iron as well as gold in your life."

She glanced at him genuinely touched. "Can it really matter to you?"

"Why shouldn't it?"

"The first time I met you I was a little afraid of you."

Clark chuckled. "Am I so formidable?"

"Not to me any more. Perhaps it is because we understand the same things." She pointed to the rapids. "This, for instance."

"Would you tell me just what you hear out there?"

She shook her head doubtfully. "There are no words for most of it, but I seem to catch the voices of things that want to be expressed somehow." Then, with sudden breathlessness, "It's a universal language — like music."

"That's it," he said soberly, "it has all the majors and minors." He regarded the girl with quickening interest. What was the elemental note in her that responded to this thundering diapason?

"It's a voice crying in the wilderness," she continued in the same low tone, then, with a smile, "at least it was a wilderness before you came. I wonder if you would do —" she broke off suddenly, her eyes brilliant.

GOLD, ALSO CONCERNING A GIRL

"Tell me, and I'll do it."

She clapped her hands. "I wish you would visit us all when we go camping next month; you'd like it."

"I'm sure I would, but —"

"But what? I knew there'd be something."

"I'd have to take the works with me."

"But you said you'd do it." She glanced at him as though confidence were shattered.

"Then I will, if it's humanly possible."

"It will be about a hundred miles down the lake, near Manitoulin Island. Father knows."

"I'm glad father knows," he smiled.

The girl walked slowly back with the feeling that she had seen further into the heart of this remarkable man than ever before. Opposite the blockhouse, at which she looked with a strange sensation, she met Belding, swinging in from the far corner of the works with a transit over his shoulder. She seemed thoughtful and distraught, and he glanced at her puzzled.

"Been exploring? I didn't know you were coming up."

"I didn't know either," she said a little nervously.

"Will you come back to lunch?"

"Sorry, I'm too busy. Where have you been?"

"Over at the rapids. And, Jim, see what Mr. Clark gave me."

"Gold?" he said sharply.

"Yes, isn't it wonderful?"

"Who found it?"

"One of Mr. Clark's prospectors, Fisette."

"And who told you?"

THE RAPIDS

"Mr. Clark himself." The girl had a sudden sense of discomfort. Why was Belding so inquisitive?

"I haven't heard anything about it," he said shortly.

"No one has outside of the office, except myself."

"But why should Clark tell you?"

"I don't know. Why shouldn't he?"

Belding thrust the legs of his instrument into the ground. "I have an idea that he's telling you too much." The young man's eyes were hot with resentment.

"Jim, how dare you!"

"Well, where do I come in? You haven't been much interested in me the last year or so."

She flushed. "That's not fair. You know how fond I am of you."

"But Clark doesn't need you — and I do."

"Do you object to my having friends?" she said tremulously.

"Elsie, will you marry me to-morrow?" Belding's voice was shaky but in deadly earnest.

"What nonsense."

He shook his head. "It isn't to me,— I mean it. There is no one else. There never will be. Can't you realize that?"

"I don't want to be married — now —" she said slowly.

He snatched up his transit. "Thanks, I thought it would come to that." He took off his hat very formally and strode on. In his angry brain burned the thought that the sooner Clark came to grief, the sooner Elsie would get rid of this illusion. And

GOLD, ALSO CONCERNING A GIRL

then, as always, the brave and loyal soul of him sent out a silent protest.

By now the wires were humming, and through St. Marys the news ran like quicksilver. In years past there had been individual discoveries by wandering bushmen, but none of them of value. Tales were afloat that old Shingwauk down at the settlement knew of a gold bearing vein, and that the knowledge would die with him. But at the formal announcement that the Consolidated had found gold, it was universally believed that it was of a necessity a bigger and better thing than ever before, and carried with it all the reputation of Clark's immense undertaking.

So began the rush to the woods. It was not one in which tenderfeet deserted their jobs and took to the hills, but a stirring amongst the stiff bones of old prospectors who had given up the fight but were now infused with new courage. In Fisette they saw the man who had won out for the second time while they sat and smoked. There was a seeking out and sharpening of picks blunted by innumerable taps on forgotten ridges, and a stuffing of dunnage bags, and a sortie to Filmer's store for flour and bacon and a few sticks of forty per cent. dynamite, and patching of leaky shoe packs. Twenty-four hours later the little station up at the works was crammed with men whose leathern faces were alight with an old time joy, and whose eyes sparkled with the flame of a nearly extinguished fire. After them came others from greater distance, then peddlers and engineers representing mining firms in search of properties, and keepers of road houses where

THE RAPIDS

the lamps burned all night, and there were women and songs and whiskey that flouted the peace of the forest. And with all this the traffic returns of the Consolidated Company's railway leaped up, and Fisette, who was in charge of a dozen men stripping his find of roots and earth and moss, began to hear all round him, both near and far, the dull thud of blasting and the faint clink of hammer on steel.

But it was a month before the general manager's private car slid into the siding at Mile 61, where Clark, descending, found Fisette waiting for him, and together they stepped out for the discovery. Here and there along the trail other prospectors fell in silently behind. They wanted to see Clark when he got the first glimpse of the vein. Arriving a little breathless, he looked down at the bluish, white streak that nakedly crossed a little ridge, dipped to a ravine on either side, and reappeared boldly further on. Fisette picked up samples from time to time, at which his patron glanced, and finally, taking mortar and pan, crushed a fist full of ore and washed it delicately, till a long tapering tail of yellow metal clung to the rounded angle of the pan. And at that Clark asked a few questions of the mining engineer who had come with him, nodded contentedly and started back, leaving Fisette with the pan still in his muscular hands.

That night the breed squatted by his camp fire, too offended to smoke and wondering dumbly why his patron had left so soon and said so little, for this was a day to which he had looked forward for weeks. He did not dream that Clark was even that moment think-

GOLD, ALSO CONCERNING A GIRL

ing of him as the private car clicked evenly over the rail joints on the way to the iron mines. And this indeed was the case, for in the first tide of the rush of gold seekers Clark had discerned the workings of an ancient rule. Always it had been gold which inflamed the human mind to endure to the uttermost. His imagination went back, and he saw the desperate influx heading for California, for Australia, for South Africa, that mob of adventurous spirits for whom there burned nightly over the hills the lambent promise of the morrow, strengthening and invigorating to further effort. He saw this mob lose itself in forest, mountain, plain and canyon, a wild-eyed herald of civilization. He saw roads and bridges, farms and villages take form along the trail it traversed, till, slowly but inexorably, the wilderness was conquered, and the sons of the pioneers sat in contentment under their own roof-tree in full possession of a wealth greater by far than that their ancestors had come to seek. But it was gold with its yellow finger that first beckoned the way.

Next day, at the iron mine, he stood listening to the deep cough of the big crusher and the loose rattle of machine drills. A little on one side, and as yet unshaken by dynamite, was the knoll on which Wimpercy and the rest had been told what they were sitting on, and he smiled at the recollection. Surveying the widening excavation, he reflected that here, after all, was the heart of the entire enterprise. In fifty — in a hundred years — the mine would still be unexhausted. It did not seem romantic like Fisette's vein of gold ore, this barren-looking upheaval, but to him

THE RAPIDS

the romance of a thing was in its potentiality and not its appearance, and it moved in his mind now that there was every reason for haste. Philadelphia was beginning to weary of capital expenditure, and demanded an output of steel rails at the earliest possible moment.

Completing his round with a visit to Baudette's headquarter camp, he inspected train loads of pulp wood ready for the mills. The areas originally secured were nearly denuded and Baudette was forced further afield. The mills were doing and had always done well, but their profits were so instantly absorbed by allied and interlinked undertakings that Clark at times wondered whether he was asking one dollar to do too much. He reflected with a touch of surprise that the small company formed to supply St. Marys with water and light was, after all, the only one which from the first had actually disbursed dividends. But the rail mill would settle all that. Returning to the works he found a note on his desk that Townley, the chemist, would like audience. He sent for him.

"Well?" he demanded impatiently; "what about that sulphur?"

Townley submitted a condensed report. "We can get it out at a cost of about half the market price." He spoke with a note of triumph. He had been slaving over the problem with the sacrificial zeal that characterizes all keen chemists. But Townley did not know, and it was impossible for him to know, that many things are feasible in a laboratory which are irreducible to commercial terms.

GOLD, ALSO CONCERNING A GIRL

Clark nodded as though he expected this. "Bring Belding in here."

When the engineer appeared, he went on, "We're going to do something new. Townley will give you his end of it, and you work out the rest. It's chemical engineering, so get any assistance you need. Give me estimates of costs and say how soon the plant can be put up. Figure on a hundred tons of sulphite pulp per day — dry weight. That's all."

The two went out, and he leaned back, pressing his finger tips hard on his lids, and finding in the red blur that followed something that soothed and rested his eyes. He was not one who sought out problems and chased them to their solution, but rather one who perceived the problem and, by singularly acute vision, perceived also the solution just behind it. There were so many things that were overlooked by others but presented themselves to him for attention, that he had long since ceased to wonder why the world was full of men he considered ineffectual. Now he ran rapidly over the existing situation, marshaling his various undertakings in due order, when there sounded in his head something that seemed like the tearing of a piece of cloth. He drew a long breath, experiencing for the first time in his life a sense of intolerable weariness. And then, suddenly he thought of Elsie.

It was strange that he should think of her now — there were so many other and insistent things. Wimperley and the rest had come up to congratulate him and gone away elated but at the same time puzzled that he should regard the discovery with such apparent in-

THE RAPIDS

difference. It was true that creditors were becoming pressing, but the rail mill, it was universally admitted, would pull the thing through. Now a reaction set in and he longed for a little solitude. It lay in his mind that just over the horizon was something more inviting than all that had taken place.

An hour later he was in the bow of a big tug, heading down stream, having left orders that he must not be disturbed. As the green landscape slid by he gave himself over to retrospection, and his mind wandered comfortably back through all the stages of the past years. Surveying the folk of St. Marys, he concluded that only Filmer and Bowers had been active supporters from the start. He would remember that. Came a voice at his elbow. It was the master of the tug.

"Where to, sir?"

"A hundred miles from here there's a camping party. Find them."

They anchored that night in a long and narrow inlet where the trembling reflection of the tug's funnel lay beside the mirrored tops of pine trees that clung to the rocky shore. Ahead and behind was the open lake. There was no sound but the twitter of sleepy birds and the honk of a startled heron that winged its flight to solitudes still more remote. Then Clark began to fish, and, just as he landed a five pound bass, a girl's voice sounded clearly while a canoe floated round a nearby point. Elsie was in it and alone.

XVII.—THE GIRL IN THE CANOE

SHE stared at him with undisguised astonishment. "Good evening," he laughed. "Here I am!"

The girl grew rather pink. "Isn't it wonderful that you really found us?"

"I didn't, the captain found you."

"It's hard to think of you as — well — just here."

"I came down for a day or two off. For the first time in years, I've forgotten all about the works."

"I'm glad, and do you —"

At that instant there came from between Clark's feet a mighty thump, and the big bass, curving its spiney back, leaped clear of the boat and landed in the brown water with a splash. A flip of the broad tail and it vanished.

"You've lost your fish!" exclaimed Elsie, aghast.

"Perhaps you lost it, but it doesn't matter."

"Is that the way you feel, just slack and careless?"

"Just like that."

"I knew you had a mind above fish," she laughed.

"That's a distinction, because few fishermen have. Now I'd like to thank you again for your note of a few weeks ago."

"Do you really remember that?" she said earnestly.

He nodded, and over him came a slow conviction that there was an avenue of life he had never traversed and which seemed to be, after all, more inviting than he

THE RAPIDS

had allowed himself to believe. Elsie was years younger than Clark, but just now the latter felt strangely young.

"Do you recollect finding out that I had but a few personal friends?"

"Yes, of course."

"Well," he said thoughtfully, "I would like another."

"Oh!" She stared at him, her startled eyes full of light.

"You don't mind, I hope?"

The canoe drifted like a leaf towards his heavy boat, but Elsie's paddle was motionless.

"It would make me very happy. But could I really do anything for you? It has always seemed that," she hesitated and her lips became tremulous, "that you didn't need any one." Then she added under her breath, "like me."

Clark's face was grave. "And if I did?"

She looked at him with growing fascination. Surrounded by the gigantic things of his own creation he was impressive, but here in the solitudes he took on even more suggestive characteristics. She stretched out a slim brown hand.

"You will find me very difficult sometimes, I warn you now."

"I like difficult things, they seem to come my way."

The languid hours sped by. Clark swam, fished, paddled with the girl, entertained her party in the tug's white painted saloon, and chatted with Mrs. Dibbott,

THE GIRL IN THE CANOE

the chaperon, about St. Marys. But most of all he explored the mind of Elsie Worden. It was like opening successive doors to his own intelligence. She startled him with her intuition, delighted him with her keen sense of humor, and seemed to grasp the man's complex nature with superlative ease. And, yielding to her charms, Clark, for the first time in his life, felt that he must go slow. It was a new country to him. Previous experience had left no landmarks here.

They were drifting lazily along the shore, miles from the others, when Elsie, after a long pause, glanced at him curiously.

"Will you tell me just what you find in music?"

"But I don't know anything about it."

"Perhaps not, but you feel it, and that's what counts. I've only heard you play twice."

"Once," he corrected.

"No, I was out on the bay one night, below the blockhouse, when you were playing." Belding's name was on the girl's lips but at the moment Belding did not fit and she went on evenly, "It is something like the rapids."

"I'm glad you think that. It's the response that one gets."

"That's what I feel. You're an American, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. You see your people are more responsive than we are, and you don't seem so ashamed of enthusiasm."

"We can't help it, but it's a little awkward some-

THE RAPIDS

times," his eyes twinkled, "that is in Canada. Now talk about yourself."

"There's so little to say. I was asleep for years like every one else in St. Marys, till you came and woke us all up.

"And then?"

"I realized that life was rather thin and that I wanted a lot of things I'll never get."

"Why never,—and what do you want?"

"To be part of something bigger than myself," said the girl very slowly.

Clark felt an answering throb. That was what he had felt and wanted and achieved.

"To feel what the world feels and know something of what the world knows," she added intensely.

"I want to work."

"That sounds strenuous."

She flushed a little, "Won't you take me seriously?"

"I beg your pardon. As a matter of fact I've always taken you seriously."

"Have you, why?"

"Perhaps because I don't know anything about your sex," he answered teasingly. "I never had time,—they're sealed books to me."

"So this is your first exploring trip?"

"The very first,—and it's not at all what I expected."

A question moved in Elsie's eyes but she did not speak. Clark, taking in the supple grace of her figure and expanding to the candor of her spirit, wondered if now, at the apex of his labors, the color of his fu-

THE GIRL IN THE CANOE

ture life was being evolved by this girl who was as free and untainted as the winds of Superior. He had at times attempted friendships of another kind and found them unsatisfying and pondered whether this might not be the human solution of that loneliness which he had admitted to her, months before, was only so far assuaged by driving himself to the uttermost. Then her voice came in again.

"It was so queer meeting you here, just as if the voice of the rapids had carried a hundred miles. I always associate you with the rapids."

"But they'll go on forever, and I won't."

"You're doing something better than that," she said swiftly.

He laid down his paddle. "I'd like very much to know just what my new friend means."

"You're touching the hidden springs of things that will go on forever." Elsie's voice was vibrant with feeling. "That's the difference between you and other men I know. You're in the secret."

Clark drew a long breath. "When did you decide that, and why?"

"When I heard about your speech that first night. I was only seventeen then but I felt almost as if you'd told me the secret. So I've followed all you've accomplished since, and I would give anything to have done just the littlest part of it."

"So it's just a matter of recognizing one's destiny and following it?" he said curiously.

"Just that." Complete conviction was in her tones.

"Then, for the first time in my life, I'm wondering

THE RAPIDS

what destiny has in store for the immediate future," he said with a long stare of his gray eyes, and in them was that which set her heart throbbing.

"You must go to-morrow?" she ventured. Could such wonderful moments ever be repeated?

"Yes, at sunrise, and I'll be at the works at noon. Do you know that you've done a lot for me? It's a selfish remark, but it's true, and may we have another talk when you get back?"

Her lips trembled, and Clark, gazing at her, felt an intense yearning. She was very beautiful and very understanding. Then again he hesitated. There were things, many things, he had in mind to arrange before he spoke. A few weeks would make no difference, but only prolong those delightful and undecipherable sensations to which he now yielded luxuriously. If this was love, he had never known love before.

The sun's red orb was thrusting up over the glassy lake when, next morning, the big tug with a slow thudding of her propeller, moved from her anchorage. At Clark's orders they passed on down the channel, and just where the lake began to broaden was a cluster of white tents. Two Indians were warming their fingers at a rekindled fire. Clark stared hard, and lifted his hat.

One of the tent flaps had been opened, and a girl stood against a snowy background, her hair hanging loose. As the tug drew abreast she waved good-by, and, for another mile, till he swung round the next point, he could see the slim figure and its farewell salutation. There was something mystical about it all.

THE GIRL IN THE CANOE

The girl vanished abruptly behind a screen of trees, the propeller revolved more rapidly, and the sharp swish of cleft water deepened at the high, straight bow.

He stood for a long time immersed in profound thought, and oblivious of the keen air of early morning. Never before had he found it hard to go back to duty.

Six hours later the tug swept into the St. Marys River, and three miles ahead lay the works, the vast square-topped buildings rising, it seemed, out of the placid waters of the bay. He drew a long breath and emerged from fairyland. Had he created all this? Yet it was not more real than something he had just left and had also created.

XVIII.—MATTERS FINANCIAL

THE young manager of the local bank through which Clark transacted his affairs sat late one night in his office. He had just returned from dinner at the big house, where he left his host in an unusually genial and communicative mood. It seemed that Clark's mind, tightened with the continued strain of years, had wished to slacken itself in an hour or two of utter candor, and Brewster had listened with full consciousness that this was an occasion which might never be repeated. But in his small cubicle, walled in with opaque glass, Clark's magnetic accents appeared to dwindle before the inexorable character of the statement Brewster now scrutinized. It was the detailed and financial history of each successive company, a history in which birth and bones and articulation were clearly set forth, and what struck the young man most forcibly was the extraordinary way in which each was interlinked with the rest. The combined capital of all was, he noted, twenty-seven million dollars, and greater than that yet reached by the Canadian Pacific Railway. Brewster had known it before, but the bald and cumulative figures in front of him made the fact the more momentous.

Probing still deeper, it became apparent that while the pulp mills made steady profits, these were so adjusted as to form but one link in a chain. In all there

MATTERS FINANCIAL

were some ten companies, each drawing from the others its business and its surplus. Clark had not been far wrong when he reflected that he might be asking one dollar to do too much, and now the sharp brain of the young manager was coming to the same conclusion. Behind his office building passed Clark's steamships, for there was a transportation company, and into the wilderness Clark's trains plunged with unfailing regularity. Up at the works the blast furnaces were vomiting flame and smoke, and the rail mill was nearly completed. Baudette was sending down train loads and rafts of wood, and at the iron mine dynamite was lifting thousands of tons of ore. The entire aggregation of effort and expenditure had been so systematically interwoven that Brewster there and then decided that if one link in the chain should part, the whole fabric of the thing would dissolve. It was true that he made no advances without authority from his headquarters, but he had long been aware that Clark's was the largest commercial account in Canada and, he reflected gravely, it all went through his own office. Two days later he reached Toronto, and asked audience of his general manager.

Now since this record is partly that of the relative standing of different individuals in the development of a little known district, consider Brewster in consultation with Thorpe, the general manager of his great bank. Brewster was young, active, in close touch with Clark and his enterprises, enthusiastic, yet touched with a certain power of quick and ruthless decision. He had been interested and even thrilled by the doings at

THE RAPIDS

St. Marys, but he had never yielded himself completely to Clark's mesmeric influence. Thorpe, a much older man and of noted executive ability, was one of those who by that noted address at the Board of Trade had been rooted out of long standing indifference and imbued with surprised confidence, and this translation, so rapid in its movements, still survived. In consequence, he listened to the younger man with a thinly veiled incredulity.

"I can't quite see it," he said thoughtfully, "even from your own account. It's probably the proportions of the thing that makes you anxious."

Brewster shook his head. "No, it isn't that. There's a big power house on the American side and it didn't earn a cent for a year, something wrong with the foundations, though it's all right now. There's the sulphur extraction plant that doesn't extract sulphur, and —"

"What?" interrupted Thorpe. He, like others, had read of the new process with keen interest, and was anxious to learn details.

"It worked in the laboratory but not on a commercial basis. Belding, the chief engineer, is all cut up about it. Consequence is Clark is buying sulphur, and just now pulp prices are so low he's not making anything out of it."

"Have you seen Wimperley lately?"

"He was up with Birch a week or so ago."

"Say anything particular?"

Brewster smiled reflectively. "He didn't seem to want to talk."

MATTERS FINANCIAL

"What are the obligations?" asked Thorpe after a little pause.

"Of all companies?"

"Of course."

"About two millions as nearly as I can get at them."

"And to us?"

Brewster handed over a slip of paper. "This is a copy of what I forwarded yesterday."

The older man's brows cleared a little. The combined overdraft was just over a hundred thousand, against which the bank held Philadelphia acceptances which he knew would be met. He glanced over the statement again.

"You've looked after this extremely well. Now what do you want me to do?"

Brewster drew a long breath. "I don't want you to take my word for anything, but come up and see for yourself. Go into the woods and up to the mines and through the entire works — then come to your own conclusions. It may be I'm too near the thing to get the right perspective, but I give it to you as I see it."

Thorpe nodded. "I know you have and your branch has done extremely well."

"Thanks." Brewster laughed. "That's due to the man we're talking about."

"And supposing," put in Thorpe thoughtfully, "supposing the whole thing were to go smash! What would you say?"

The other man's eyes rounded a little. "I'd say," he answered slowly, "that even in that case the entire district would be in Clark's debt."

THE RAPIDS

"Yes?"

"Because they know what's in the country now and how to get it out — and they never knew that before."

"And the immediate future — what do you see that depends on?"

"Steel rails," said Brewster with conviction. "Will you come up?"

Thorpe did go up, and Clark, who knew that Brewster had been in Toronto and conceived why, met them both at the works with a genuine welcome. He felt, nevertheless, that his undertakings were to be analyzed with cold deliberation.

At the end of two days Thorpe had seen them all — had peered into the gray black bowels of the iron mine, watched Baudette denuding the slopes of a multitude of hills — seen the stamps in the gold mill hammering out the precious particles that were caught by great quicksilver plates, — seen booms and train loads of pulp on their way to St. Marys — seen the white spruce shaven of its brown bark and ground and sheeted and loaded into the gaping holds of Clark's steamships — seen the blast furnaces vomit their molten metal — seen the rhythmic pumps and dynamos send water and light through every artery of the young city — seen the veneer mills ripping out flexible miles of their satiny wood — seen the power house on the American side making carbide to the low rumble of thousands of horsepower, and seen the electric railway that linked Ironville with St. Marys. And all the time Clark had put forward neither arguments in his own favor nor any request for credit, but only allowed

MATTERS FINANCIAL

these things to speak for themselves, till, as the aggregate became more and more rounded and the picture more complete, Thorpe perceived that here was something which initiated by an extraordinary brain had now grown to such vast proportions that it supplied its own momentum, and must of necessity move on to its appointed and final result.

But Clark did not distinguish in either Thorpe or Brewster any determining factor of his future. They would do what they were meant to do, and play the game as the master of the game decided. They might modify, but they would never create. His mind was pitched so far ahead that it was beside the mark to attempt to influence men who, he conceived, were not themselves endowed with any prophetic vision. He had to deal with them and he dealt with them, and though he wondered mutely at their abiding sense of the present and their apparent lack of faith in the inevitable future, he descended from the heights of his own imagination and parleyed in the bald and merciless language of strictly commercial affairs.

It was at the end of his visit that Thorpe asked about the sulphur plant.

Clark glanced at him curiously. The sulphur plant was so small a fraction of the whole.

"There's a certain step in the process we have not perfected — that's all. You don't believe in economic waste, do you?"

"No, certainly not — if avoidable."

"Well, I'm satisfied that this is avoidable. It is just as much a mistake to allow water to run away

THE RAPIDS

when it might be grinding pulp, as it is to drive sulphur into the air instead of catching and selling it. You pollute the air, you kill the trees, you spend a lot of money, and you waste the sulphur. Nature has a lot of processes up her sleeve we've not realized as yet. This is one of them."

"Then this plant is a mistake?" Thorpe got it out with some hesitation.

Clark laughed. "Some of it — so far. I make plenty of mistakes, don't you? It seems to me it's the proportion his mistakes bear to the things that succeed which determines a man's usefulness. I don't believe in the one who doesn't make them."

Thorpe grinned in spite of himself. "Perhaps you're right — but I'll be glad to know as soon as you're rolling rails. When do you expect that?"

"In six months at the latest. I'll send you a section of the first one."

The banker drove toward the station in unaccustomed silence. Presently he turned to Brewster. "You were right and, by George! Clark is right too, but we must not get our mutual rectitude mixed up. He's got to go ahead, come what may, and we've got to help him all we reasonably can, but with us our shareholders come before his. That's the point. He may turn out to be a private liability, but in any case he's a national asset. I want a bit of that first rail. Good-by!"

And Clark, after waving farewell at the big gates of the works, had gone into the rail mill and stood in the shadow in deep contemplation. He glanced at the massive flywheel, the great dominant dynamo and the

MATTERS FINANCIAL

huge, inflexible rolls. At one end were the heating furnaces, their doors open, and gentle fires glowing softly within to slowly raise the temperature of newly set brick. Around him was the swing of work directed by skilled brains, and machinery moved slowly into its appointed place of service. It was a good mill, he reflected, for a second hand mill. For all of this the place was dead — awaiting the pulse of power and the unremitting supply of incandescent metal. Glancing keenly about, he experienced again that strange sound as though between his temples, and suddenly he felt tired. The thing was good, very good. But he too wanted to see the lambent metal spewed from between the shining rolls.

It was a notable day in St. Marys when the first rail was actually rolled, and symbolical to many people of many different things. Infection spread from the words to the town, till all morning there was a trickling stream of humanity that filed in at the big gates and moved on toward the dull roar of the mill. Even though the mass of folk in St. Marys still failed to grasp the full significance of the event, they saw in it that which put their one time Arcadia beside Pittsburgh, and invested their own persons with a new sense of importance.

Clark, watching the fruition of a seven year dream, felt thrilled as never before. Here, in this heat and mechanical tumult, was being forged the last link in the chain into which he had hammered his entire strength and spirit. It was a good thing, he reflected, to make pulp and ship it on his own steamships, but

THE RAPIDS

this was the biggest, deepest and most enduring thing of all. Some men at such a moment would have felt humble, but he recognized only the unfolding of an elemental drama in which he played his own particular rôle. A few weeks later he closed a contract with a great railway company for a million dollars' worth of his new product, which he unhesitatingly guaranteed would live up to the most exacting specifications.

The new plant had settled down to the steady drive of work when the mayor of St. Marys, walking up the street in a mood of peculiar satisfaction, saw just ahead of him the bulky form of the chief constable. He stepped a little faster and laid a detaining hand on the broad shoulder.

"Arrest yourself for a minute," he chuckled. "How's our town pessimist feeling this fine morning?"

Manson glanced sideways. "I suppose you want to rub it in. Well, I don't know that my opinions have changed very much."

"Takes more than a few thousand tons of rails to move you, eh? But isn't Mahomet going to come to the mountain at last?"

Manson shook his head.

"If he doesn't the mountain will come to Mahomet — and crush him," continued Filmer gayly, then, his mood changing, "but honestly, old man, why don't you drop your gloomy views? You've an excellent chance right now, and, besides, they're getting rather amusing."

"I've a right to my own opinions."

MATTERS FINANCIAL

"Naturally, we all have, but you don't act up to them — at least you didn't."

Manson glowered at him with quick suspicion. "What's that?"

"Your left hand knows what your right hand doeth — every time, — at least it's so in St. Marys. You're too big to get under a bushel basket. Every one saw that you were dabbling in real estate for years, and made a good clean up, but you seemed so darned ashamed of it that no one cared to discuss it with you. And all the time you were our prize package disbeliever. What's the use? It's your own affair, but why don't you make a lightning change like the man in the circus last week? Your friends would welcome it. You're not the man we used to know."

"If it's my own affair," came back Manson with growing resentment, "why not leave it at that? Did you never make any money out of a thing you didn't believe in?"

"Yes," said Filmer slowly, "I have, but after that I believed in it, and said so. It was only fair to the fellow behind it."

Manson went stolidly back to his square stone office, where he took out his broker's statement for the previous month and stared at it silently. Already he knew the figures by heart. Another two point rise in Consolidated stock and he would realize his net profit of one hundred thousand dollars. He ran over his own scribbled figures on the back of the statement, as he had gone over them many times before. They were quite right. For weeks past his selling order had been in,

THE RAPIDS

been acknowledged, and now at any moment the thing might be done. It might even have already been done. The blood rushed to his head at the thought. How many other chief constables, he wondered, had amassed fortunes from behind their forbidding gray stone walls? Then he thought of his wife and children, and his eyes softened, while the broker's statement in his big hand trembled ever so slightly. He smiled at that, and it came to his mind that perhaps statements in other men's hands sometimes trembled at the thought of their wives and children and the fortunes that — and here Manson felt vaguely uncomfortable and, getting up, slowly locked his desk.

Just at that moment, Filmer, who had returned to his office, was sitting staring at a half-section of steel rail that lay in his hand. It was smooth and highly polished, a thin slice of the very first product of Clark's last and greatest undertaking. He experienced a quite extraordinary sensation at feeling the thing, and it snatched his mind back seven years till again in the Town Hall he heard a magnetic voice assuring the citizens that the town lacked just three essentials — experience, money and imagination, and that the speaker would supply them all. It was a far cry from that evening to the deep drone of the rail mill, and Filmer, detaching himself from the picture in which he formed a part, began now to perceive its dramatic vitality. Were Clark taken out the whole thing seemed to fall to pieces.

And up at the See House, the bishop was examining just such another section of rail, while the gold of his

MATTERS FINANCIAL

episcopal ring shone beside the gray of steel. To him it meant many things, but chiefly it was prophetic of that which would soon put an end to the detachment and loneliness of the scattered communities to which he ministered. Holding the thing thus, his heart went out to Clark, and he yearned with a great longing over the spirit of this man who so reveled in the joy of creation. His eyes wandered to the Evangeline. She lay at anchor just off shore. A thin film of smoke slid from her funnel, and he could see the Indian pilot swabbing down her smooth teak decks. Then, in sudden impulse, he smiled and, laying the rail section on top of a half finished sermon, wrote a short note, and, calling his man servant, instructed him to wait for an answer.

A little later the note reached Clark in his office, where he sat motionless under the sway of a slight reaction. At the moment he did not want to work. He was continuously conscious of ribbons of red hot rails that streamed like fluted snakes from under the gigantic rolls, and they seemed to be boring their way into his brain. He had shipped thousands of tons to the railway company and there were thousands more to go. In a week or so he would get a formal acceptance of his product, and then — He stretched himself a little wearily and pressed his eyes till a red and compelling blur brought its transient solace. And just then his secretary came in with the bishop's note.

Dear Mr. Clark:

I am off this afternoon for a five day cruise of visits amongst the islands of Lake Huron. Won't you come with

THE RAPIDS

me? I know it would be good for me and think it might give you what I'm sure is a much needed rest. My Mercury, I mean the hired man, awaits your answer.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES, ALGOMA.

P. S. I never attempt to proselytize my guests.

For a moment he puzzled over the signature, and finally made out that it was the bishop's Christian name followed by that of his diocese, for this was the first letter he had received from the prelate. Then he felt a sudden throb of impulse. He had a natural liking for the bishop and this, with his insatiable appetite for new experiences, prompted an acceptance. He touched the bell, and his secretary reappeared.

"I am going away for five days," he paused, adding with a smile—"on missionary work. I haven't any idea where we are going and don't want to be disturbed. I'll be back before we receive the results of the United Railway Company's tests. That's all."

It was mid-afternoon when the Evangeline, gliding smoothly over the polished surface of the bay, drew in towards the Consolidated dock, and Clark, watching from the shadow of a mountain of bales of pulp assembled for shipment, saw the Indian pilot amidship at the wheel and the bishop, in a big, coarse, straw hat, standing in the slim bow, a coil of rope in his hands and a broad smile on his big sunburnt face.

"Catch!" The bight of the rope whistled through the air and struck smartly at his guest's feet.

The latter laughed, picked it up and made fast. It struck him suddenly that it was curious the bishop

MATTERS FINANCIAL

should be throwing him a rope. Then he reflected that it was the bishop and not himself who needed help.

The former was very gay, his kindly face alight with amusement and anticipation. Presently came a throb from the engine room, and the Evangeline sheered off down the river, past the new St. Marys where staring red brick buildings shouldered up out of the old time houses, past the See House, while a flag fluttered jerkily down from the tall mast at whose top it flew when the bishop was at home, past the American side, where Clark's big power house stretched its gray length at the edge of the river, and on till they came to the long point that closes the upper reach, and just then both men turned and looked up stream at the vanishing bulk of the huge structures beside the rapids, and the flat line of tremulous foam that marked the rapids themselves. The voice of them was, at this distance, mute.

The yacht glided on and still neither spoke. Clark was full of the thought that, for the second time in seven years, he had deliberately left his work. Four hours ago the thing would have seemed grotesque, but glancing at the bishop's broad back, he realized that here was a friendly interceptor to whom he had been wise to yield. The miles slid smoothly by, and still neither talked. Each was busy with the contented reflection that in the other he had found one who possessed the gift of understanding silence.

The Evangeline rested that evening not far from where Clark had anchored so recently. He sat motionless, breathing in the welcome benison of the spot, till the Indian pilot put out port and starboard lamps

THE RAPIDS

whose soft red and green shone steadily into the gathering dusk.

"Is there a mission here?" asked the visitor presently.

"No, but there's the best bass fishing in Lake Huron," grunted the bishop placidly, already busy with rods and bait. "The mission is ten miles on. Now we're going to catch our breakfast — there's an excellent spot just opposite that big cedar."

Clark had not fished much, but he loved it, like most men of intellect, and discovered that he had been steered straight into the best fishing he had ever known. They were small mouthed bass, deep of belly and high of back, and they fought in the brown water over the twitching minnows that dangled from the Evangeline bow and stern.

"I'm glad you came." The bishop smoothed down the spines of a big three pounder ere he gripped it.

"Best thing I ever did. Fishing is a clerical pursuit, isn't it?"

The bishop nodded without turning his head. "Yes, but it's not always for money. We have to bait our hooks according to the season of men's minds. By the way, some of my best friends are in your country."

"Yes?"

"Had a church in Chicago for ten years,— there at the time of the great fire — it stopped a few blocks from my house. I had to marry a devoted couple a day or two later and the wedding fee was a bunch of candles. Glad to get them; whole city in darkness and it seemed

MATTERS FINANCIAL

suitable that the parson's house should reflect light. You remind me of one of my friends at that time."

"Why and how?" said Clark. He knew so little of himself as appearing in other people's minds.

"This man was a big Chicago importer — look out, you've got another bass — and he was in New York at the time of the fire — heard his warehouses were threatened and bought trainloads of stuff and rushed it through. It arrived while the other stuff was still smoking, and he made much more than he — My dear sir, that's the best fish of the evening, let me look at him."

Clark laid the twitching body of a bass on the teak deck, while the big man came aft, trailing his bait and slowly reeling up his line. As the minnow glimmered in towards the yacht's black side, there came a heavy plunge, the bishop's rod bent double, and the line sang off his reel. He was a famous fisherman, and Clark watched him admiringly. To every ounce of pliant bamboo on his six ounce rod there was, down in the brown water, a pound of savagely fighting weight. Deeper went the big fish and further, but ever the taut line yielded by fractions, and the nearly doubled rod kept up a steady insidious strain. As the bass dashed back, the bishop recovered his nearly spent line while his lips pressed tight and the light of battle shone in his large eyes. For a quarter of an hour the fight lasted, till the great fish floundered once or twice with heavy weariness on the surface, and the angler worked him toward the yacht. Then a bare brown arm shot a landing net underneath his horny shoulder and,

THE RAPIDS

with a dexterous twist, the Indian pilot landed him on the deck in a thumping tangle of line, leader and net.

"And that," said the bishop with a deep sigh of content, "will do. We've got supper and breakfast as well."

The night deepened, and in the little saloon host and guest sat down to a supper of fried fish, blueberries and cream. The small, red curtains were drawn, and over the tiny fireplace a binnacle lamp glowed softly. Forward in the bows, the Scotch engineer and the Indian pilot sat conversing in deliberate monosyllables, and in the east a horned moon floated just clear of the ragged tops of encircling pine trees. Clark ate slowly and felt the burden slipping from his shoulders. It was a strange sensation. Across the narrow table towered the bishop, the genius of the place. He was still reminiscent of American experiences and talked as talks a man who is comfortably sure of himself and his companion.

"I don't believe I have any very close personal friends," said Clark presently. "I've moved about too quickly to make them. One meets people in the way of work, and so far as my own employees are concerned, I see them chiefly through their work. I can't let the personal element intrude."

The bishop smiled, remembering something similar he had said himself. "Well, I must say I'm particularly drawn to Americans. Perhaps it's because they suit the Irish, but I seem to find in them a certain intellectual generosity one recognizes at once and appreciates. There aren't so many fences to climb over.

MATTERS FINANCIAL

And, besides, they appear to understand my cloth."

"Yes?" Clark looked up, keenly interested. He had not thought much about the clerical profession.

"It's quite true. They realize that a parson is a man of like predilections and impulses and weaknesses with themselves, and that a cassock does not stifle the natural and healthy ambitions of the male mammal. Nothing is more trying for the cleric than to be put aside as though he were some emasculated ascetic who was unattracted by merely natural things."

"I hadn't thought of that."

"Very few people have, except the cleric; and he thinks of it a good deal. There is even the tendency to believe that the parson, because he is a spiritually minded man, is incapable of horse sense in practical and public affairs. By the way, don't you smoke?"

Clark smiled and shook his head. "I've never wanted to."

"I did once," chuckled the prelate. "It was a big, black cigar inside a hedge about three miles out of Dublin. I've never smoked since. Now, if I may go back to the clerical question, you'll probably realize that a great many mistakes are made."

"I hadn't thought much about that either."

"Probably not, but it's without question that a good many parsons realize in a year or so that they're not up to their job, especially if it's a city congregation. The young and over enthusiastic rector addressing a church full of shrewd, experienced men of affairs is often in a grievous case. I've sat in the chancel and listened and writhed myself. There's many a poor

THE RAPIDS

parson who would make a good engineer, and he knows it."

"Then why shouldn't he change over?" Clark was getting new avenues opened for him in hitherto unexplored directions.

"Because he's ashamed to, and the world has the habit of thinking that the man who has once been a parson is not available for anything else. Suppose one of my missionaries came to you for a job — what would happen?"

"I'd send him to you for a letter of recommendation and then put him to work."

"I believe you would, now, but not a month ago."

"That's quite possible."

"Well, you have no conception that envy may, and sometimes does, exist in a black coated breast."

"But why envy?"

"Because devotion to one cause does not stifle natural aspirations in another. For instance I've often longed for time to do some writing, on my own account. One of my traveling preachers has invented a railway switch and I know he dreams of it and makes sketches on the margin of his sermons. No, my dear sir, the public has doubtless classified us, and possibly correctly, but we are still fanciful, and —" the bishop hesitated and broke off.

"Go on, please." Clark's gray eyes were very penetrating and understanding.

"Possibly I've talked too much about the parson, but there's one thing that is often denied him and he longs for it intensely — companionship with his fellow

MATTERS FINANCIAL

men. The sacrifice of that one thing hurts more than any other privation. And now that this one-sided symposium on the parson must have taxed your good nature, let's go to bed. We lift anchor at seven-thirty, and I go over the side at seven. There's fifteen feet of water here and a sandy bottom, and if you like we'll get a few more bass first. Good night! I think you'll find everything you want in your cabin. Sleep well."

A little later Clark stepped out on deck and breathed in the ineffable serenity of the scene. A ray of moonlight lay along the inlet like a silver line. As he went down to his cabin he noticed that the other's door had swung open. Inside the bishop was kneeling by his narrow bunk, his face buried in his hands, his broad shoulders bent forward in prayer. Clark's breath came a little quickly at the strangeness of it all and, moving on tip toe, he turned the handle softly. In his own cabin, he lay for an hour staring out of the porthole at the dim world beyond. He tried to think of the works, but they receded mysteriously beyond the interlocking branches of the neighboring pines. They seemed, somehow, less imposing than formerly, and Wimperley and Stoughton and the rest of them were a long way off. There came to him the lullulant lapping of water along the smooth black side of the Evangeline. Presently he dropped into the abyss of sleep, dreamless and profound.

XIX.—THE WEB OF LACHESIS

THE sun was shining level through the tree-tops when they began to fish. In fifteen minutes the bishop called a halt, dipped a bucket of water and washed his hands. Clark, still under the spell of this new friendship, saw the great amethyst of the episcopal ring gleaming softly amid the glint of fish scales, and dimly remembered the story of the Man and the Galilean fisher folk whose catch was poor till He told them where to cast. Presently the bishop stripped and went overboard into the brown water with a clean schloop, where he was instantly followed by his guest.

Here they played like schoolboys, shouting and blowing in utter physical abandonment, while the copper colored pilot stared at them with expressionless eyes and wondered mutely why people wanted to get so wet. The bishop was like an otter, swimming under water a long way to reappear with a sharp whistle in an unexpected place. Soon the first flush of Clark's enjoyment passed. He felt suddenly tired and turned toward the Evangeline, where a small wooden ladder had been let down just athwart the cabin cockpit. And in that instant he felt a sharp and agonizing pain.

"Help!" he called. "Help!!" A deadly stiffness was stealing from foot to knee.

The bishop heard, rolled over on his back and, treading water, saw Clark's face. The lips were puffed out,

THE WEB OF LACHESIS

the head bent back and he was splashing desperately.

"Hang on to it, I'm coming," roared the big man, and, laying his right shoulder forward, began to tear through the water. Like a tug he came, with a bubble of foam around his head, half his face submerged, his powerful arms and legs working like pistons. Such was the power in him that at each stroke his great body seemed to lift and fling itself forward, and behind him broadened a long, diamond shaped ripple that slid whispering to the shore. The next moment sounded a voice, as from a long way off:

"Put your arms straight out — rest your palms on my shoulders. When I turn, trail your body and don't try to do anything. That's it." The bishop was breathing hard, but not in any way distressed.

They moved toward the yacht and Clark felt beneath his hands the working of big, flexible muscles, and the buoyant surge of the practiced swimmer who glides with the minimum of effort and resistance. In five minutes he was scarifying his skin with a rough towel and tingled with renewing circulation.

"You saved my life that time," he said earnestly.

The bishop pulled his shirt over his head. "Well, that's my business, isn't it? and I fancy it's about the only thing I can do for a man like you. Let's have some breakfast. I smell fish."

Clark, in spite of his late experience, ate as he seldom ate, for there were two things at which Indian Joe was a master — pilotage and cooking. The visitor asked for more, silently deciding that his Japanese must go, being no such artist as this.

THE RAPIDS

"You're using royal silver," said his host presently with a grin. "I bought this boat from the agent of a certain august personage for whom she had grown too small, and I got everything complete. She has a bronze propeller and copper rivets. I've got the royal burgee too, and fly it only on special occasions."

The other man smiled and nodded. It did not somehow seem strange to him to be using royal silver in a remote bay on Lake Huron. Something about the bishop made it appropriate. Then they lifted anchor and the Evangeline moved on under a climbing sun and over a laughing sea for ten miles till she nosed into a creaking dock and made fast. Just beyond was the settlement, from which the parson came hurrying down, followed by others. Clark looked at him, a lean, overworked man, with rusty clothes and joy in his face, and remembered for the first time in his life that there was one fashioned in all ways like unto himself.

"I'm off into the country to visit for a few hours," said the bishop, introducing him. "You can come if you like, but it's not a good road, and I would advise you to stay where you are. Joe will take you fishing and there is plenty to read in the bookshelf. I can recommend Henry Drummond or Marcus Aurelius. Good-by!"

He drove off in a rattling buckboard, and the woods swallowed him. A little crowd had gathered in the dock, glancing after the bishop and then down at the slender deck of the Evangeline. The stranger looked up at them, nodded and disappeared. Presently Joe stretched an awning over the long boom of the main

THE WEB OF LACHESIS

mast, and Clark sat in the shade listening to the silence and surveying this isolated village. What, he wondered, could keep people in so forgotten a community, with its unpaved street, its straggling wooden houses, its background of unbroken bush. There was no water power, no big timber, and, from the look of the country, no mineral. He put the thought out of his mind with luxurious deliberation and tried to decipher why a man like the bishop should waste his time here when, without doubt, he could be a shining light in a great city. After a little the reason became clear, and, smiling to himself, he reached up for Marcus Aurelius.

They supped that night at the parsonage, where they yielded to the stark simplicity of new surroundings. The parson with his wife and children regarded the bishop with their eyes in which love and reverence were clearly mingled. At the stranger they looked a little insecurely, for the bishop had, that afternoon, told who he was. They had heard of him already, and in this remote village his person had been invested with mysterious powers. He was a force of which they read, rather than a living, breathing man, so that however he might try to talk affably and communicably, he found himself hedged about with a spiny growth of fame that the others made but little attempt to penetrate. His garment of authority and influence was too great. He was too big and didn't fit.

Later came service in the bare, wooden church, and for the second time he saw the prelate in robes of office. The sun was setting and its level beams filled the tiny edifice with a softened glow. Overhead the

THE RAPIDS

sky was like a benison, while the bishop spoke words of cheer and strength that went straight to the hearts of his congregation. He stood, as he always stood, in front of the chancel, a great figure in white and scarlet, with a deep mellow voice that seemed to dissolve in the hush of evening like a lingering caress. Clark, in his corner, sat motionless, touched as he had seldom been touched before. He began to see why the bishop spent his life in this wilderness.

Service done, the Evangeline moved out over a sea that was sheer, flat silver. Indian Joe sat motionless at the wheel, the spokes pressed lightly against his polished palm. At the engine room hatch a voiceless Scotchman smoked a contemplative pipe, and for the rest of it there was only the muffled thud of the propeller, the subdued stroke of the engine and the whisper of split water at the yacht's knifelike stem. Clark did not speak. It seemed as the yacht slipped on, that he was exploring a kingdom in which the population and their ways were hitherto unknown to him; a domain that was pathetic rather than poor — and remote from his scheme of things. He had given this phase of life no thought till the bishop introduced him to it, and was puzzled that both men and women could be so deprived of the salt of life and yet be apparently content. The bishop's voice broke his reverie.

"Did you ever consider how much those with imagination owe to those who have none?"

Clark started a little, then shook his head. "No, I haven't."

"Isn't it true?"

THE WEB OF LACHESIS

"It may be — but I don't see what there is to create any obligation."

"Well, you're discharging it every day. You create things primarily for yourself, but actually what you do is to create opportunities for others less endowed with imaginative power. And whatever may be the ultimate scope or result of your work at St. Marys, that is the highest service it will ever perform. And, by the way, my friends seemed a little afraid of you at supper, though I assured them you were perfectly harmless. Do you mind telling me if you got any impressions?"

"About the events of the day?"

"Partly. I'm wondering just what people like these suggest to a man of your sort. Is it all very drab and uneventful?"

"Well," said Clark thoughtfully, "it is something like that, isn't it?"

"I thought so once, but that's just what I don't now admit, and urge that this is a case where we should consider comparative values. Satisfaction is not, after all, so much a matter of the size or quality of the thing that satisfies, as it is of the individual who is affected and his circumstances. Small joys go a long way on Manitoulin Island."

"But are people who live like this not conscious of any deprivation?"

"It's not so much that as it is wonder what it would be like to own certain things or comforts. You don't find much envy in the bush country, but you do find a lot of self-respect. I could tell you things about some

THE RAPIDS

Indian friends of mine that would clear your mind, if you happen to think that the only good Indian is a dead one. It seems to me that life in the open, even though a great part of it is spent in exposure and hardship, has certain spiritual compensations."

Clark nodded. "Perhaps."

"Put it this way: you deal with many kinds of men, but do you not always feel better disposed toward a simple soul, say like our friend Fisette, than toward some shrewd person who arms himself at every conceivable point?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, that's what I feel about my people. Most of them are unarmed and they trust me, and anything I can do seems small in comparison to that trust. You've got a trust too, my friend."

Clark smiled. "That's what my directors lose no opportunity of telling me."

"But who or what is your Director?" asked the bishop, leaning forward earnestly. "You needn't be anxious, I'm not going to sermonize. Your Director is the same as mine, the great Force, call it what you will. It drove me into the church and drove you to what you are, and our first trust is to ourselves—you'll agree with me there—and with that undischarged nothing else can be carried out. Just at this moment I wish I were as competent for my job as you are for yours."

"But, bishop, you're —"

The big man raised his hand. "Not a word, for tonight I feel like Browning's Bishop Blougram who

THE WEB OF LACHESIS

'rolled him out a mind long crumpled, till creased consciousness lay smooth.' It does me good to rub out the wrinkles occasionally. Now tell me, looking back at the last few years in St. Marys, do you appreciate what you've done?"

"I haven't had much time to look back" said Clark thoughtfully. "The opportunity was there and I took it, then I was fortunate enough to enlist the necessary support. Since that time the district seems to have responded to every conceivable need, and we have been able to fall in step with a natural scheme for developing natural resources, that's all."

The bishop shook his head. "Not quite: it's a great drama you're enacting up there, with the rapids for a setting. They run through it all, don't they? — the changeless, elemental background before which man climbs up on the stage, makes his bow, enacts his part and gives place to some one else. You are sending out multitudes of influences that will never be determined or traced to their result. You once told me that it all began when you overheard a conversation in a train."

"Yes," Clark paused, then added with a laugh, "an example of the importance of small things. You've made your point, bishop."

"Thank you, but I've never been able to decide whether a thing is small or not. Some of the things that you and I prize very highly may actually be of small account."

For a while Clark did not answer. Ever since coming on board the Evangeline he had been conscious of a

THE RAPIDS

new atmosphere, tenanted by the spirit of her master, and of a new language which, though its tones were familiar, seemed to be the vehicle of a novel wisdom and understanding. He was impressed with the utter candor of his host, but chiefly with his superlative sympathy with all men. The visitor fell under the influence of a benign nature which, intensely human in all its attributes, proffered its solace to all alike. It was, he concluded, the life function of the bishop to give himself in royal abandonment.

He did not often put himself in the place of other men, but that night, after the Evangeline had slid into a moon spilt harbor amongst the hills, and the bishop explained that he had come here because poor people were apt to overtax themselves in entertaining, the visitor lay on the cock pit cushions and stared long at the starry sky. Nothing important was to be attached to this trip, and yet he felt it to be momentous. He knew he would always remember it, and that the memory would hereafter assert itself in unexpected moments. He admitted being influenced by the bishop and yet felt equipped for all that he had to do without any such influence. But there crept over him the slow conception that life might unexpectedly change, and that under hitherto unimagined conditions he might turn to these hours for the comfort of remembrance.

Three more days of missionary work and the Evangeline turned homeward. Clark took the wheel for an hour, with the bishop beside him.

"I hope," said the latter, "that the trip has been a success for you?"

THE WEB OF LACHESIS

The amateur pilot gave an involuntary start. The question pitched his mind forward to the works, and he realized that for five days he had forgotten all about them.

"It has been a very great pleasure to me," went on the prelate quietly. "I'm apt to have too much broadcloth and not enough gray tweed in my life. Most of us are in the same case, and one's love of one's work does not suffer by an interest in other things."

"My dear sir, I've benefited enormously. I'm a new man and ready for anything — even the worst." How little did he dream that at that very moment Lachesis was spinning her invisible web.

"Ah! that's what we must always be ready for — or the best, which is sometimes the same thing. Keep her to port a little."

The yacht rounded a long point and came in sight of the works, while Clark experienced a throb of thankfulness that his host had attempted no missionary work on him. He was as good as his word. There had been no proselytizing.

As the vessel reached the dock, they said good-by, each ready to do his job over again, and Clark, with his hand enveloped in the warm clasp, realized much of the secret of the prelate's life, which was no secret at all but just the benignity of a great and tender soul. He stepped over the yacht's side and glanced at his secretary who advanced to meet him with a telegram in his hand, noting that the young man's face was pale and his eyes unusually brilliant.

"This came an hour ago, sir."

THE RAPIDS

With an impatient gesture he opened the folded sheet and read, his heart slowly contracting :

Regret unable to accept first cargo of rails being five thousand tons. These not up to your guarantee and our specifications. Full information this mail with the result of physical and chemical tests.

UNITED RAILWAY COMPANY.

Involuntarily he raised his head. The yacht was backing out, and the bishop, coiling a rope in her bows, straightened up to wave farewell. Automatically Clark waved back, then, with the telegram crumpled in his palm, turned and walked slowly toward his office. Something the bishop had said began to sing in his brain. Could the best and the worst ever be the same thing?

XX.—THE CAR OF PROGRESS HALTS

THE paralyzing news had lain in the faithful keeping of a confidential operator and the white faced secretary who had guarded it jealously. The latter followed to the private office. When the door was closed in his face, he went to his own desk and sat blindly at his letters. Clark stood at a big window that commanded the rapids. Deep lines were furrowed suddenly on his face, and his eyes were like sunken bits of cold, gray steel. He felt the gentle vibration of the mills, and through it pierced the words of the telegram like a thin sharp voice that would not be denied. It was fully an hour later that his call sounded for the secretary.

"The rail mill will be closed shortly for temporary alteration. If you are asked anything about it — and you will be — that is all you know. This means that the furnaces must be blown down. I don't anticipate any serious delay. You will repeat this telegram to Philadelphia, and add that I will report more fully in the next twenty-four hours. There's just one thing more. A good deal of importance will attach to your manner and attitude for the next few days. That's all."

The young man nodded, finding it difficult to speak. There was nothing unusual about his leader, except that the eyes were a little more deep set, the voice a shade harder.

THE RAPIDS

A few moments later, Clark stood in the rail mill watching the titanic rolls spew out ribbons of glowing steel. It came over him in a sickening flood that the whole giant undertaking was useless, and instead of the supreme delight he experienced a few months before there was now but a huge mechanical travesty that flouted the unremitting strain and effort of years. He was defacing the everlasting hills with dynamite to make something the commercial world did not want. A surge of protest overcame his spirit, followed by a cynical contempt for the futility of the best efforts of man. Impatiently he walked up to the superintendent of the mill.

The latter touched a grimy hat. "We're on the last ten thousand tons for the United," he said with a note of pride—"the mill's running fine."

"It may be," snapped Clark acidly, "but shut it down. Your rails are no good."

The other man blinked at him. "Eh?"

"Do what you're told," repeated Clark with the least shake in his dominant voice. "The United doesn't want these rails, though some one else will."

Over the superintendent's sooty face crept a look of blank amazement. "Shut down! why?" he floundered helplessly. "I can't, till this heat is through, and there's nothing the matter with the rails."

"Other people say there is, so get the heat through and obey orders." Then, with sudden anger, "Is the job too big for you?"

He turned away abruptly, passing the whirling fly-wheel, the ponderous cylinders, the glowing ovens,

THE CAR OF PROGRESS HALTS

while above him the traveling crane moved like a whining monster across the blackened roof. He hastened, desirous of getting out of the presence of these giants whom he had assembled only in order that they might deride him with their massive proportions.

So on to the towering masses of the furnaces. Here he saw poured a molten charge, and stood fascinated, as always, by the smooth and deadly gleam of molten metal, till, curtly, the same orders were issued. No further charges should be fed in before orders to that effect. Then back to his office, where he cancelled shipments of coke, and sent to the iron mine a curt word that stilled the boom of dynamite and silenced the sharp chatter of the drills.

Gradually through the works spread the chilling news. A slowly thickening stream of Swedes, Poles and Hungarians filed out of the big gates, and Ironville was, in mid-afternoon, populated with a puzzled multitude that repaired automatically to the saloons. Through pulp mills and machine shops, through power and pumping stations, the story went, growing as rapidly as it spread. Time keepers heard it and office clerks, and the crews of tugs and steamships that lay at the big dock below the works. And while rumors were widening every minute, there was a knock at Clark's door and, looking up, he saw the comptroller who stood quietly, with a check for the week's payroll in his hand.

"How much?" The voice was admirably impersonal.

"One hundred and ten thousand." The comptroller

THE RAPIDS

was a short fat man, and at the moment quivering with suppressed excitement.

The general manager scribbled his initials on the blue slip, handed it back without a word, and did not even look up as the official went out. A few minutes later he walked slowly through the pulp mill, stopping here and there to speak to superintendents and workmen. The swishing rasp of the great stones and the steady rumble of turbines brought him a sense of comfort. He progressed deliberately, and with his usual keen interest, so that, although hundreds of eyes followed him, not a man could assume that anything had gone seriously wrong. It was an hour in which he found and radiated confidence. Here, at least, was the universal conclusion that all was as it should be. He was on the bank of the power canal when his secretary approached again.

"What is it this time?"

"Hobbs is at the bank with the payroll check, and has just telephoned up. I think you'd better speak to him, sir."

Clark's lips pressed tight and his eyes opened a little. Retracing his steps, he listened to an agitated voice.

"Mr. Brewster states he has no authority to cash this check unless we cover our overdraft. He would like to talk to you."

"Let him."

Again the receiver spoke, while Clark's face grew suddenly very grim. "I think you'd better come up and see me," he said shortly.

Then he listened. "Very well," he snapped. His

THE CAR OF PROGRESS HALTS

features were like a mask. "I'm going down to the bank," he went on dryly to the secretary, "for the first time in his life Mr. Brewster is unable to leave his office and come up to mine when invited."

He drove into St. Marys followed by the glances of every man and woman who caught sight of the erect figure. The town was full of confused and conflicting rumors, but nothing had as yet crystallized. The appearance of Clark in mid afternoon at the door of the bank, thickened the air. It was known that people with whom he did business invariably went to him. Not in years had he been to Brewster. But for all of that he seemed as cheerful as usual, and took off his gray hat to Mrs. Worden with accustomed and somewhat formal urbanity. Inside he found Hobbs, his round, soft face looking unhealthily pallid, and Brewster with his jaw stuck out, a determined expression on his young features.

"Well, what's the trouble?"

"Nothing very serious." Brewster spoke with a pleasant accent, but he was confronting the most difficult hour of his life. "Just this check."

"What about it?"

"I can't make any further advances till your present acceptances are met in Philadelphia. We have half a million of them."

"That payroll has got to be disbursed."

"I'm sorry, but I can't cash that check."

The lines on the older man's face tightened and deepened. "Mr. Brewster, we have spent some fifteen millions of capital through your bank. This amount is

THE RAPIDS

too small to discuss. Do you realize that, if you persist, the men will go unpaid for the first time in seven years?"

"I'm sorry, but I can't help that." The young manager began to feel more fortified.

"Is this because there's a temporary interruption at the rail mill?" said Clark bitterly. "You're assuming a big responsibility."

"I regret that I can give no reasons, and am only doing what seems best in the interest of the bank. If the acceptances are met,—and the first falls due two weeks from to-day — our head office will probably authorize a further advance, provided we are secured. Under the circumstances your Philadelphia office should take care of this matter."

"And this is your last word?" snapped Clark with emphasis.

But Brewster had by this time completely pulled himself together. The most trying moment was passed, and for once the mesmeric influence had failed. He felt behind him the authority of Thorpe and his own directors, and revolted at the thought of imperiling his own record.

"You understand," came in Clark's voice, "what happens when men are not paid — especially the type of many of our employees. The Swede and Hungarian are apt to be ugly. Further — an unpaid payroll has a bad effect on a company's securities, to say nothing of the effect on business confidence in St. Marys. You have, of course, weighed all this."

Brewster's eyes were very grave and his face flushed.

THE CAR OF PROGRESS HALTS

"I'm sorry, but I'm doing what I take to be my duty," he said with a desperate effort.

The older man's mood changed as though in a flash. "In that case I've nothing more to say." He got up. "Come on, Hobbs, Mr. Brewster seems immovable. We'll have to wire Philadelphia for the money." With that he went briskly out.

The banker looked after him in wonderment. The poignant instant was over, and he pondered whether, after all, he had done right. His cipher message sent to Toronto as soon as the news from the works reached him, was still unanswered, but, he reflected, he had tried to act on what he believed to be Thorpe's judgment as well as his own. Should the telegram for which he waited not confirm his decision, there was time enough to apprise Clark of the fact that night. And just then the mayor entered the office and sat down, mopping his face.

"What about it?" he demanded presently.

"I don't know any more than you do — possibly not as much."

"Well," said Filmer absently, "there's a lot going round. Some have it the works are seized for debt, others that there's a mistake in the rails, others that the Philadelphia directors have resigned. Anyway half the thing seems to have stopped."

"Not half of it, just the iron and steel section."

"Yes, but that's the big end of the whole show. It was expected to carry the burden."

"It's still there, isn't it?" said Brewster fretfully.

The mayor glanced at him quickly. Something in

THE RAPIDS

the voice suggested that the bank was involved and that the thing was getting on Brewster's nerves. "I hope you're all right," he answered evenly, "but I'm carrying more stuff than I like to think of just now."

He departed feeling quite obviously rather balked of his desire for inside information. Just outside he met Dibbott.

"I saw Mr. Clark just now," said the latter. "He doesn't seem at all worried. Of course you've heard the news?"

Filmer nodded. "Yes, and I've a feeling we're going to hear more before long. Haven't got any Consolidated stock have you?"

"Stock! Never owned a share in my life, but I've a good mind to sell my place now while the price is up. Look at that, will you!"

The street cars coming down from the works were bulging with the population of Ironville, who had consequently decided to take the holiday in St. Marys. Hundreds of them were dressed in Sunday best and bent on an outing; big Slovaks and Poles whose horny fists gripped the platform rail while they smoked cheap cigars with gaudy labels and chattered volubly to each other. It was good to be out of Ironville.

On the way down they passed Clark, and with boyish abandon waved their hats in greeting. Clark smiled back and whirled on. The sight of them provoked the question in his mind and brought it closer. What if these men were not paid next week, as they were promised? Returning to his office, he devoted himself to innumerable details affecting the iron works. To

THE CAR OF PROGRESS HALTS

shut them down was not so simple a thing as he anticipated. They had acquired a momentum it was difficult to arrest. Then, wiring in code to Philadelphia for his requirements in cash, he went up to the big house on the hill and shut himself from all intruders.

On the terrace, overlooking river and works, he walked ceaselessly up and down, irritated but not alarmed. Some foreign substance had got into the delicate wheels of progress, and the machine was for the moment out of adjustment. From where he stood the works were visible, and while he missed the long illumination of the rail mill and the pyramidal flame of the converters, there still sparkled the pulp mill with its long, lighted windows and the gleam of water in the tail race. Twenty-four hours ago he was sitting on the deck of the *Evangeline* with the genial bishop. Now he was very much alone. What would Wimperley and the rest do in such an emergency? He had never seen them in a corner. His reverie was interrupted by a message that Manson desired to see him.

"Riots?" said Clark to himself, then aloud, "Bring him here."

The big man came up, extending a friendly hand. Clark had a curious dislike for physical, personal contact, even of the slightest, but now overcame it with difficulty and motioned his visitor to a chair. The latter sat speechless.

"Well, Mr. Manson?" Clark asked when the silence became too perceptible.

"I came to ask you if there were any prospects of trouble at the works," said the latter presently. He

THE RAPIDS

spoke jerkily, and in a note far removed from the deep boom of his usual voice.

"Why should you expect any trouble because pay day is postponed for a week?"

Manson lifted his heavy lids. "Is it only for a week?"

Clark got up and paced the terrace, his head thrust forward, his hands behind his back. There was that in the visitor's manner which puzzled him. The evident agitation and discomfort, the anxious moving of the thick arms, the constant shifting of the feet, all pointed to something that struck deeper than the possibility of a riot. And Manson, he had reason to know, was no coward.

"I anticipate that it will be less than a week. How many men have you?"

"Thirty, and myself."

"We have twenty guards at the works, also, if need be, there's the local militia."

"Have you ever seen them?" said the chief constable contemptuously.

"No, but the law is behind them and a certain amount of discipline," then, his voice changing abruptly, "Mr. Manson, are you afraid?"

The big man stared at him as though fascinated. His dark face began to work convulsively in an obvious attempt to voice that which disturbed him. Clark watched it all.

"Well," he said with ill concealed impatience, "if it's not an imaginary riot that's troubling you, I'll say good evening. I'm rather busy at the moment."

THE CAR OF PROGRESS HALTS

At that Manson half lifted himself out of his chair and leaned forward. "It's the works," he whispered huskily, "are they all going to hell?"

Clark stared at him in open astonishment. It was an absurd thing that at this moment he should be subjected to a visit from a man who had never believed in him, but who was now evidently torn by anxiety at the thought of his failure. There came a swift and silent suggestion, but the thing was too remote.

"Mr. Manson," he said slowly, "you never took any stock in me or my efforts, so why worry?"

"But that's just what I did do," croaked the constable, reddening to his temples. "I invested all I could and," he added dully, "I've got it now."

"Ah! so that's it?"

"And I'd be grateful if you could tell me —"

"So you said one thing and did another!" The tones were like a knife. "Well, that's your privilege, and none of my affair, and," he concluded curtly, "I don't care to discuss it. Good evening."

But Manson was on his feet, too desperate to be denied. "It's not your affair what I may have said or done? I'm a shareholder — a large one. I've a right to come here and ask you a question. It's nothing unreasonable — and you'll answer it." He stood over the smaller man, dark and threatening.

Clark laughed in his face, till, with that extraordinary perception which so frequently cleft to the essential essence of things, he perceived that there was that which was more important than the fact that Manson had been speculating and would certainly be bitten.

THE RAPIDS

His attitude in public was worth something — at any rate in St. Marys. Known universally as a critic and pessimist, it would be notable if now, in the time of crisis, he became a supporter. Manson as a shareholder did not matter, but officially he did matter. Very swiftly Clark ran over this in his mind, while the big man waited, no longer a menace but only a straw borne by the flood which was the creation of Clark's imagination. There was no doubt in the latter's mind as to the ultimate solution of present difficulties. He still believed, as he always believed, in himself, in the country and in his enterprise. So, very deliberately, he began to talk.

"You have asked me a very extraordinary question — that is from you — but it appears," here the voice was a little sardonic, "that you had more confidence in me than you admitted. Now you ask about the future. I tell you that I never had more faith in the final outcome of affairs than I have at this moment. There have been difficulties of which the public knew nothing — and this is the only one which has become common knowledge. Do you expect any one to build up a concern like this without anxious moments? You know what St. Marys was seven years ago, and I remember very distinctly your attitude toward myself. It has taken seven years," here once more the voice was full of contempt — "seven years and a crisis, to convert you. Speculators will doubtless take advantage of this interruption, but I am confident that long after you and I have passed on, steel rails will still be rolled at the works. Good evening."

THE CAR OF PROGRESS HALTS

Manson muttered something unintelligible, and moved off down the long hill that led to St. Marys. For the first time in his life he believed in Clark, believed in him in that hour when the faith of thousands was being shaken. He had no conception what a pigmy unit he himself was in the multitude who followed their remarkable leader. He had no grasp of the fundamentals of which Clark confidently took hold in the time of stress. He did not wonder who else was in like case with himself. He only knew that this man had thrown him the end of a rope, and he grasped at it with all the strength of his soul, and had no intentions of loosening his hold.

Later that evening he went in to see Filmer, whose office lights were on, and here found Dibbott and Worden. The three were talking earnestly, and as the broad figure loomed in the doorway Dibbott gave a dry laugh.

"Our pessimist's reputation is looking up. Have you come to crow?"

Manson shook his head and told them very briefly of his visit. There was no mention of his own speculation. "So after all, the thing is probably all right," he concluded. "At any rate, Clark doesn't seem worried, so why should we?"

Filmer gave vent to a low whistle. "Hypnotized at last!"

"No," said Manson, flushing, and went on to promulgate the reasons for his hopes. The others said nothing, but he could see they were impressed. Presently he went out on a midnight round of inspection,

THE RAPIDS

and, as the door closed behind him, Worden nodded thoughtfully.

"For the first time in seven years he seems reasonable in this connection. After all, if we get off the handle it will be a mighty bad example. How about it, Mr. Mayor?"

"Well," said Filmer, caressing his glossy whiskers, "I always believed in Clark and I guess I do now. If he were trying to make money for himself out of this thing we'd know it, but he isn't. Gentlemen, the judge is right — we've got to hold the town together."

On the corner they met Bowers, the Company's solicitor, who was walking slowly home smoking a peaceful cigar.

"What's this?" he said, grinning. "Looks like old times to see you three together."

Filmer had a sudden thought. "Do any of you chaps remember what anniversary this is?"

The others searched their brains and gave it up.

"Seven years ago to-night there was a certain notable meeting in the town hall."

"And now there's one in the corner. "We've come down in the world," put in Dibbott.

"Possibly, but possibly not. I was just thinking of all that has happened in seven years. It should prevent us from getting rattled." The mayor turned to Bowers, "Seen Clark to-day?"

"Haven't seen or heard of him for three days," answered the lawyer shortly — then, because he wanted to avoid being pumped, "good night — I'm for my blameless couch."

THE CAR OF PROGRESS HALTS

They looked after him and at each other. "Seen Belding?" asked Dibbott of the judge.

"No, he's down in Chicago. I think he's buying machinery. Now it's late and if I don't go home too, I'll get into trouble." He turned towards the old house by the river, and halted a few steps off. "Good night, you fellows, I feel better."

Thus it came that while a brooding, gray eyed man paced his terrace with his eyes fixed on the far white line of the rapids, whose call was indistinguishable at this distance, there was spreading almost under the shadow of the works a novel spirit of confidence in himself and his vast enterprise. It was not till a sudden question arose, that St. Marys realized the prodigious meaning of their new city and how lavishly all Clark's promises had been redeemed. In the hour of anxiety they leaned on him more than ever before. This new birth—this upholding trust—was conceived at the very moment when Wimperley and the others were gathered in harassed counsel, and through Philadelphia and the surrounding state was broadening a dark cloud of rumor that carried swift fear to thousands of hearts. But it was not fear that came to the keen brain of Henry Marsham.

By eleven that night Clark had heard nothing from his head office. The strain became too great, and he went into a little room off the library where an extension of the private wire had been carried up from the works. There was once a time when he could send and receive in the Morse code, so now he sat down and laid a somewhat uncertain finger on the tilting key.

THE RAPIDS

"Phil — Phil — Phil."

Instantly and to his surprise, came the reply.

"Sma — Sma — Sma."

"Is — Wimp — there?" The thing began to come a little easier.

"Yes."

"Tell — Wimp — I — want — answer — funds — for — payroll."

Clark got this off laboriously, conscious that however clear might be the message, the wire was a poor transmitter as compared to eye and voice.

"Wimp — says — meeting — going — on — now — cannot — act — before — to-morrow — Get that."

"Yes," flashed the plunging reply.

"Wimp — waiting — your — report — defect — in — rails."

Clark's brows wrinkled and he bent over the key. "Cannot — send — report — till — several — chemical — anal — anal —"

"Yes — analyses — I — get — you — are — complete — is — that — it."

"Yes." Clark breathed a sigh of relief. His brow was wet.

"When — will — that — be — Wimp — asks."

"Three — days."

"Wimp — says — hurry — up — things — shaky — here — expect — attack — by — bears — have tried — to — place — rails — elsewhere — but — not — successful. Wimp — says — good night."

Clark's eyes sparkled with anger and he hammered the key. There were other things he wanted to say —

THE CAR OF PROGRESS HALTS

and must say. But for all his repeated calls there was only silence, till in an interval, while he rubbed his throbbing fingers, the receiver began to tilt.

"Wimp — says — good night —" it announced with metallic finality.

He got up and stood staring at the thing for a moment, his face heavy with anger, the group in Wimperley's office vividly before him. He could see the cold features of Birch, sharpened by the tenseness of the hour into a visage bloodless and inflexible, with thin tight lips and narrow expressionless eyes. He could see Stoughton, red with discomfort and resentment; Riggs' excited and anxious little face, and Wimperley himself, cast with a new severity; all supremely conscious of that which probably must be faced on the morrow. And what about Marsham? Tottering was now their faith in the essential future of the works and the great cycle of their operations. The wire had transmitted their decisions, but over its yellow filament had also trickled their apprehension. With a touch of cynicism he recalled the congratulatory messages — the very first it had carried.

He went out on the terrace again, seeking the black bulk of the rail mill in the medley of structures down at the works. Presently he found and scrutinized it. Somewhere in its gloom lurked an error, or else in the great furnaces that shouldered nakedly into the moonlit air. With a sudden sense of fatigue, he turned to his bedroom.

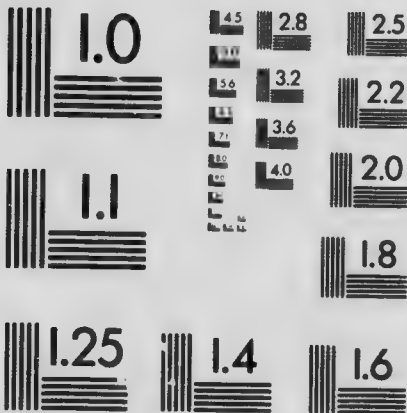
"At any rate the chief constable is with me" he soliloquized sardonically, "and that's something."

In five minutes he was sleeping profoundly.



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 1)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

XXI.—THE CRASH

AROUND the neck of every great industrial undertaking is hung a chain of unlovely parasites, who fatten on the interruptions to its progress and the fluctuations in its success. These men create nothing — contribute nothing. Playing on the fears and hopes and untempered weakness of the public, they reap where they do not sow and feed the speculative appetite of millions. To them it is negligible whether good men go down or honest effort is rewarded. Predatory by nature and unscrupulous in action, they prey upon their fellows, and, like the wolf, are strangers to mercy and compassion. Their wealth is not an asset to the world, because it represents nothing they have originated, but only that which they have filched from others less shrewd and unscrupulous. They do not hesitate to magnify the false or to bring to ruin what they find most profitably assailable. They have respect for neither genius nor labor, but juggle with the efforts of both in a fierce game for gold.

As the gong struck on the Philadelphia Exchange next morning, a well known operator associated with Marsham's firm threw five thousand shares of Consolidated on the market. It was taken at forty-eight, a loss of two points, and in that first transaction the value of the entire enterprise shrank by half a million.

THE CRASH

A moment later, Wimperley knew of it and sent for Birch, but Birch, who had been just as speedily informed, was already on his way. He came in, a little paler than usual. On his heels arrived Stoughton and Riggs.

They were in the padded seclusion of the president's inner office, while two blocks away swelled a storm, whose echoes only reached them in the sharp staccato of the ticker in the corner as it vomited a strip of white paper. Wimperley stood there, the strip slipping between his fingers, while selling orders began to pour in to Philadelphia, and the price of Consolidated crumbled like dust. He could visualize the scene on the floor of the Exchange, the frenzy of men smitten with sudden fear, and the deliberate cold-blooded action of others who lent their weight to this downfall. Marsham was very busy. Greater grew the flood, with sales of so great quantities of stock that they perceived the market was going boldly short. Then came an avalanche of small holdings, till the ticker announced that it had fallen behind the record of transactions and that Consolidated was now offered at thirty-five with no bidders. This was three-quarters of an hour after the Exchange opened.

Stoughton and the others sat quite motionless. The thing was too big for them to grasp at once, but they had a dull sense that the foundation stones of their great pyramid were shifting, that the gigantic structures at St. Marys were dissolving into something phantom-like and tenuous. At this juncture a message was brought in from Clark.

THE RAPIDS

Hear market is very weak. Please buy five thousand for me by way of support.

Wimperley read and handed it silently to Riggs.

The little man swallowed a lump in his throat. "By God!" he said unsteadily, "but he's got sand, no doubt about it."

"What's that?" Stoughton demanded dully, and, reaching out, glanced at the telegram. "Why throw Robert Fisher to the wolves? They're doing well enough as it is," he grunted, and relapsed into a brooding silence.

Then began to arrive inquiries from country banks and cancellations from country subscribers. Wimperley read them out as they came in, and, well informed though he was of the wide distribution of Consolidated stock, experienced a slow amazement at the broad range of his followers. Their messages were indignant, despairing, threatening and pathetic. He began to wonder why he had accepted a responsibility which was now for the first time unveiled in such startling proportions. Yesterday the Consolidated was a name to conjure with. To-day it was an epitome of human fear and desperation.

Ten seconds before the noon gong struck on the Exchange, a frantic broker lifted a bull like voice above the uproar.

"Sell five thousand consol at thirty-two, thirty-two!" He bellowed it out raucously. The selling order had been flashed from Toronto.

"Taken at thirty-two," snapped Marsham's operator, who had opened the perilous game that morning,

THE CRASH

and, smiling, jotted a note on his cuff. He had made just eighty thousand dollars on that one transaction. The market strengthened a little in the afternoon on short covering, the matter of investment being thrown to the winds. Consolidated was now a gambling counter, and the closing quotation stood at thirty-five. Former values had shrunk by some eight millions. Gone was that laborious upbuilding into which Clark and the rest had thrown their very souls; overcast were the efforts of seven years. It was, to most people, a question of what might be made of what was left. The works remained, but, the public concluded, the iron and steel section, the heart of the thing, was unsound. Such is the communicable essence of fear.

At ten minutes after three the directors met to face a situation which was, in all truth, serious enough. Philadelphia banks, smarting from loans made on Consolidated stock, had declined further credit. The first payment of a million dollars for steel rails was indefinitely deferred. Creditors, galvanized by the events of the day, poured in ceaseless demands that their accounts be liquidated, but moneys due the Consolidated for pulp had been realized and diverted into the building of railways and the construction of the rail mill. Birch, his face very grave, ran over all this in a level monotone of a voice, while the rest wearily admitted its truth, and in the middle of the rehearsal a message was brought in from Clark.

Greatly regret events of to-day but am unshakenly confident for the future, given sufficient time to remedy defect in rails which should not take long. Chemical analyses show

THE RAPIDS

too high carbon and this can be rectified. Now awaiting remittance for payroll.

Wimperley read it without a trace of accentuation, while Stoughton got up and stared, as once before, at the sky line of Philadelphia.

"Well," drawled Birch dryly, "we've heard from our prophet."

"He's got more confidence in our future than we have in his past," put in Riggs.

Stoughton turned, "What about the payroll?"

"If you have a million or so to spare, we'll send it up. There's more to be met than the payroll." The voice was a trifle insulting, but Stoughton did not notice it, and Birch went on. "There's just one thing we can do, if we can't get money to run."

"Well?" jerked out Riggs, "say it."

"Shut down."

Wimperley's long fingers were drumming the table. He did not fancy himself as the president of a great company in whose works not a wheel was turning.

"I'd like to find some other way out of it. There's going to be hell to pay here, but —"

"Perhaps the ingenious gentleman at St. Marys could help out," said Birch acidly.

At that came a little silence and there appeared the vision of Clark in his office, with his achievements dissolving before his eyes.

"Robert Fisher is no financier," struck in Stoughton wearily.

Wimperley smiled in spite of himself. "Perhaps not, but he mesmerized us into that office. There's

THE CRASH

only one thing I can see — issue debentures secured by first mortgage.”

“Who’ll take ’em? We used up all our arguments long ago. Philadelphia doesn’t want a mortgage on Robert Fisher, and what about the Pennsylvania farmer?”

“What about him?” asked Wimperley pettishly.

“As I know him, he’s a bad loser — he works too hard for it. This is a case of new money from outside, and I for one don’t feel like doing any traveling.”

“In other words we’ve demonstrated that whether or not by any fault of ours, we’ve made a mess of it,” said Stoughton with utter candor.

“Something remarkably like it.”

“And when Clark told us, months ago, that he wouldn’t draw any salary, and that a lot of others were only drawing half salary to help out till the rail mill got going, we should have made provision for possible mistakes, and seen as well that we were getting in over our ears.”

“But Clark believed all he told us,” piped Riggs with a flash of loyalty.

“Of course he did, and he still does, and because he is still only twenty years ahead of his time he’s all the more dangerous.”

“Let’s get back to this payroll,” blurted Stoughton who was getting more and more uncomfortable.

“Fishing’s pretty good up there, let him fish for it.” The voice of Birch was like ice. He was one of those who by nature are fitted for cold and ruthless action in time of stress. Most of his money had been made

THE RAPIDS

across the dissecting table of enterprises, and not at their birth. He was a financial surgeon, but no midwife, and had only been magnetized into his past support by the hypnotic personality of Clark. He was grimly mindful that Marsham, after waiting for years for his opening, had got more than even. Birch's cold mind now wondered for the first time whether, after all, the cut throat game he had once loved to play was worth the candle. Here was American credit and effort massacred by American ruthlessness and revenge. Marsham had pounced upon a weak point in the Consolidated's armor and pierced deep into the body corporate. He had struck to kill.

"And would you shut down the pulp mill — market's good now?" persisted Stoughton.

"I'd rivet the whole thing tight. The railway never paid, — at least directly — that we could reckon. It's costing more to ship pulp on our own boats than the rate at which we could ship by contract — and if they are not going to bring back coke, why run them? Gentlemen, this means a smash — an interval of anxiety, discomfort, loss of prestige, and —"

"Go on, Elisha —" barked Riggs. "Oh, please go on!"

"Prestige — and later reconstruction. In the meantime, we don't spend a cent on running anything, and find out exactly what we owe. Then comes new money, and," he added cynically, "a new bunch of directors."

"And who will arrange that?" Riggs demanded abruptly.

THE CRASH

"One Robert Fisher Clark — if he has not lost all his power of magnetism."

"Aren't you guessing a little too fast?"

"No, it's quite possible. His argument will be that we didn't back him to the necessary limit — that another million would have done it — and," concluded Birch reflectively, "that may be perfectly true. But God knows we did what we could. What's this one?" He glanced at Wimperley, who was reading a telegram just brought in.

Waiting your remittance for payroll, necessary that this be provided to-day, otherwise I anticipate serious disturbance here. It is advisable that I do not come to Philadelphia just yet as my leaving here would be wrongly interpreted.

R. F. C.

There fell a moment's silence, instantly recognized by all four as the precursor of grave events. Birch had spoken the thought that lurked in all their minds. To continue running meant another payroll to be met.

It now appeared suicidal to have stretched their resources to the limit of their credit, but not one of them had remotely dreamed that a few thousand tons of steel rails were to drag the whole structure to toppling lestruction. Birch, as usual, first pulled himself together.

"It's put up or shut up, and we've got to tell Clark right now."

Little Riggs sighed despondently. This meeting would soon be over and the decision made, after which he would have to face a totally unexpected set of con-

THE RAPIDS

ditions and a circle of friends and investors who would regard him with close and uncomfortable interest.

"Well, I suppose it's shut up!" he hazarded unsteadily.

Birch looked inquiringly at the other two, who nodded without speaking, then began to write. The rest did not even glance at each other, but found absorption in walls and windows and the big map of poignant memory, while the long, waxen fingers moved inexorably on.

"What about this?"

"Under existing conditions and the impossibility of making immediate financial arrangements for current needs directors decide best to close down all work of every kind at once, giving notice that this will be only temporary. You will report here as soon as in your judgment you can wisely come down.' Is that all right?"

Stoughton bit at his thumbnail and nodded. "I suppose so — and there'll be hell to pay in St. Marys, eh, Wimperley? Our friend the chief constable will be working over time. Remember the beggar? The damn fool was right too."

"Yes, it's all right," said Wimperley, "and now I suppose there'll be writs and injunctions enough to fill the tailrace. We'd better get out and arrange some support for the market. Birch, you compound a comforting statement for the papers. We adjourn till tomorrow at nine-thirty."

They did adjourn, but lingered for an hour digging into the past seven years. It was a talk such as one

THE CRASH

might expect under the circumstances. Charged with an apprehension but thinly veiled by manner and speed, events took on for them no perspective. They were too close at hand. All this was so intimately their own and Clark's responsibility that every other consideration became instantly submerged, and it was a matter of living for the day, if not for the hour. Had any one at this time told Wimperley or Stoughton that for a pace or two they had merely fallen out of step in the march of progress, and that however depressing might be the present aspect of affairs it did not really affect the preordained outcome, they would have flouted the thought. It is not given to many men to place themselves correctly in the general scheme of the world, and to fairly estimate their own contribution. Thus it was that Wimperley and his associates read on the screen of the present only the word "failure," and were conscious chiefly of a certain self contempt for the arduous part they had played. At the last moment success had been snatched from their grasp.

Stoughton walked slowly home. He was thinking of Manson, the pessimist, who had been right. And such is the interlinking chain of life. Manson, at this moment, was sitting in his office, while his mind harked aimlessly back to the first time he had met the men from Philadelphia. He stared at a telegram that trembled between his thick fingers. His broad face was gray and ghastly. He had been here motionless for some time, when a gentle knock sounded at the door and his wife came timidly in. One glance at his face, and her arms were round his neck.

THE RAPIDS

"What is it, Peter?" she quavered.

He did not look up but held the message so that she might read it.

Sold you out to-day on stop loss order at thirty-two margin being exhausted. Farthing.

She read it wonderingly. "What does it mean; who is Farthing?"

"My Toronto broker — or at least he was," said Manson heavily.

"But I don't understand, dear."

"No, I didn't suppose you would; it means I lost my hundred thousand, that's all."

"Had you a hundred thousand?" she whispered.

"Very, very nearly, and now I haven't anything,— that is, I didn't make a cent."

She drew a long breath. "Peter, tell me just how we stand."

"Exactly where we did the day a man named Clark came to St. Marys," he said dully, "with not a cent more."

There followed a little silence, and the tears began to roll down her cheeks. He put his arm round her, and perceived, with astonishment, that they were tears of happiness.

"Peter dear," she said very softly, "you don't know how glad I am that it's all over."

"You mean the hundred thousand!" He stared at her blankly.

"Yes, just that. I know you won't understand, but things have never been the same for me since you began

THE CRASH

to try and make it. You were different — everything was different."

"But if I had made it you would have been glad."

"Perhaps — I don't know. I'm rather afraid of a hundred thousand dollars," she began to smile a little through her tears, "but now I feel ten years younger. Is that what 'stop loss' means — you don't actually lose anything?"

"Nothing more than I have sent him in this case."

"And you didn't send him my money — not that it's much."

"Good God, Mary, no!"

"Peter," she began gently, "you weren't happy all the time — I could tell that. You were trying to do something you weren't made for — I could see that too. You are very strong — but it isn't that kind of strength. People like us can't do that kind of thing — we feel too much. We haven't got much, but it represents a lot and our lives are in it, and this hundred thousand dollars wouldn't have been that kind of money, would it?"

"No, I suppose not." Manson felt the tumult in his breast subsiding.

"I know you did it for me and the children, but we don't want you to speculate for us. We just want you — as we used to have you. We have enough of everything else, and we'll all be very happy again. Oh, my dear, big, faithful husband." She slipped into his arms and put her head on his great shoulder.

And Manson, holding her to him, felt new springs of emotion unseal themselves within him. The past few

THE RAPIDS

years had not been happy ones. As his profits grew, he was conscious of the spectre of anxiety at his elbow. It had been a simple thing to make a thousand and then ten and then twenty, till, as he marched ever faster toward the siren call, he perceived that he was no longer in his own country, but one in which the landmarks were all changed. Now, with the throb of his wife's heart against his own, he acknowledged defeat, but perhaps it was defeat of that which was not himself.

Presently the little woman stirred, brushed the tears from her cheeks, and, smiling, kissed him tenderly.

"I'm happier than I've been for years. Did you ever guess that people here thought you were a rich man?"

"No."

"Well, they did, at least some of them, Mrs. Dibbott for one."

"Then you can put Mrs. Dibbott right."

"Will what has happened at the works makes much difference here?"

"Probably a good deal. I'm looking for trouble."

"Up at Ironville?" she said anxiously.

"But I'm good for it." He stretched his great arms, feeling strangely free and fit for his duty.

"What about Mr. Clark?"

At this Manson grew suddenly thoughtful. Caught up in his own anxiety, he had never considered Clark. The figure of the latter began to take on strange proportions. What, he wondered, had Clark lost? Within twenty hours of the time he maintained his

THE CRASH

unaltered belief, the bottom had dropped out. Or, he queried, had Clark merely said this to prevent him from throwing his stock on the market? He pondered over this, and decided that five thousand shares were negligible amongst millions. Then he felt his wife's inquiring glance

"I'm sorry for Clark, but I guess he's wise enough to take care of himself."

"I hope so. I've only spoken to him once, but I like him."

She disappeared presently, leaving him busy with special instructions to the police — in case of disturbance. She did not worry about that, being chiefly conscious that a load was gone from her spirit. Singing softly to herself, she went out with gladness in her eyes, and halfway to Filmer's store encountered Mrs. Bowers. The latter looked pale and tired. Bowers, for the past twenty-four hours, had been a much tried man — and his wife reflected it.

"Good evening," said the latter, "you look very fresh. How do you manage it?"

Mrs. Manson, suddenly recalled to earth, smiled gently. "I'm rather happy to-day. I hope Mr. Bowers is not very anxious."

"It's no use saying he isn't, but he doesn't talk about it. How's your husband?"

"Splendid."

"Well, you're the only untroubled pair I've heard of to-day. My husband's in a frightful temper because he didn't sell our land six months ago. He says we'll never sell it now, but I'm just as glad. Is the

THE RAPIDS

whole thing going to break up?" Mrs. Bowers swung her parasol toward the rapids.

"I — I don't really know anything about it," said the little woman with a touch of nervousness from which she recovered instantly, then, smiling, "perhaps I'll come over to-morrow."

"Do, there's a heap to talk about, and smile like that just as long as you can — the town needs it."

She walked on, her mind very busy. Without question something excellent had happened to the Mansons — and in a time like this! Manson was said to be in the way of making a fortune, and now, she concluded, he had made it. There was no other explanation for an expression like his wife's when such grim rumors were abroad. A little later she told Mrs. Worden, and both the judge and Bowers heard of it, and next day the story reached a dozen houses in St. Marys. The constable, it was said, for all his pessimism, had been sharper than Clark himself.

But Manson was only a leaf picked up by the edge of the storm in which Clark sat, its unapproachable center. The telegram compiled by Birch and signed by Wimperley, as president, was on his desk, just as the secretary had laid it before he went silently out, unable to meet the mystifying glance of those gray eyes. Clark had never moved nor looked up, nor did he till half an hour later, when he dictated a notice to be posted throughout the works. *"All operations will temporarily cease this night at six o'clock. Employees will be notified when to apply for their wages, which will shortly be paid in full. The accounting staff will*

THE CRASH

remain at duty." His voice was level and absolutely expressionless. Then he went out, and, taking the broad trail to the rapids, seated himself a few minutes later in a well remembered place.

The moments lengthened into hours and still he did not move. The sun showed its red disc through the lattice girders of the great bridge, and touched the flashing waters into gold. It was seven years since he had sat here first, and he looked expectantly about for the crested kingfisher. The voice of the river seemed unusually loud, and there was no drone from the works. He began to go over it all, but, desisting from sheer inability, pitched his attention on the rapids. Here, at least, was that which had no shadow of turning. Distinguishing the multitude of notes that lifted their booming uproar, he yielded to the sensation that he was in the midst of them, being carried to the sea.

To-night they seemed relentless, but that again was the reflection of his mood. If he was going down, Wimperley and the rest were going with him. Finally he was able, at some command from this tumult, to disassociate himself from the present and go back to the beginning. Retracing each step, he decided that, were a parallel occasion to arise, he would do the same again. He had listened to the voice of the hills and woods and water, rather than to the voice of Philadelphia, and this, he ultimately concluded, was right. There was no time to brood or forecast the future. What his soul craved was to be persuaded that it was justified up to this hour. Only thus could he find strength for that which was yet to come.

THE RAPIDS

Carrying his solitary reverie still further, he was assured that it would be for him and him alone to find the way out. Wimperley and the others were able men as far as they went, but just as they had always loitered behind his imagination, so now would they be slow in deciphering the riddle in store. He had brought them in, and it would be left for him to bring others in also. Very easily he visualized what had taken place in Philadelphia, and the group in Wimperley's office stood out quite clearly. He felt no particular sympathy for them, nor did it appear that the responsibility was primarily his own because it was his brain that conceived the whole gigantic machine. They had acted according to their final judgment, so had he. With small and genuine investors the case was different, but Clark was well aware that Consolidated stock had been a favorite Pennsylvania gamble for years. As to his own employees, he knew that the works must ultimately go on and could not go on without them. This left only himself to be considered, and at the thought this extraordinary man smiled confidently. He was stranger to that fear which is based on uncertainty of one's own resources.

An hour after sundown he went home and, sending for Bowers, the two sat talking earnestly. For Bowers it had been a day of vicissitude which he was only partially competent to face. Rooted out of a small practice in a small village, and caught up in the sweep of irresistible progress, he had never had to fight for his point. The weight and momentum Clark put before him were too great for that. But now every angle

THE CRASH

of the Consolidated Company seemed to offer itself for frontal attack. He put this to his chief in justification of his own anxiety.

"It's been a matter of writs and injunctions all day. There are enough in my office now to paper the rail mill."

"Well, why should you worry?"

Bowers glanced up with surprise. "Eh?"

"You're doing your duty, you can't do anything more. But perhaps you feel chagrined at being associated with me in the present difficulty. You needn't expostulate,—I can quite understand it."

The lawyer turned a brick red. It was quite true. He had begun to look on this calamity as one for which he and Clark were both partly responsible.

"If you worry—and it's quite absurd that you should—your value automatically decreases. Has it occurred to you that, from now on, the importance of your position is vastly increased? We shall look to you more than ever. I dare not worry—there's too much to be done. You were our advisor, now you are our protector against unfair attack—and there'll be lots of it. What's more, Bowers, you are the only one who is sure of his money."

Bowers nodded. He began to feel more comfortable.

"What's going on in St. Marys?"

"Nothing much yet—they don't know what to get ready for. Filmer and the rest are sending out accounts they hope to collect, a good deal of property is on offer without any takers, but, at the bottom, I don't

THE RAPIDS

think the town is rattled. There's a sort of feeling that the works are too big to be wiped out."

Clark smiled gravely. He was aware that to the townsfolk the works had become part of the landscape, and, imaginatively, not much more. But just as they could not contemplate the obliteration of part of the landscape, so it was difficult to conceive permanent idleness at the works. It was a case of the immobility of the non-speculative mind, which is lethargic in hours of exaltation but comfortably steadfast in times of stress.

"Listen," he said earnestly. "There's an element in Ironville which may soon have to be controlled by force; but as to St. Marys what you've got to do is to spread the feeling that there's nothing like confidence to maintain business. Can't you see that if your office were knee deep in writs it doesn't affect you? You've got to remain the efficient, smoothly working, impersonal machine. So have I — and so has every one who takes the responsibility for the actions of those of lesser intelligence. Leaving out first and second causes — we're all doing just what we're meant to do, and it doesn't matter who or what meant it. Wimperley and the others will be up here soon, and regard me as a crazy idealist who inveigled them into building a house of cards. The heads of departments — at least some of them — will look at me and wonder how it was that I gave them any confidence in the future. Hundreds of creditors will consider me personally responsible because they have to wait for their money, and about two thousand Poles and Hungarians will want to

THE CRASH

kill me to gratify their sense of personal injury. On top of that, ninety-nine men out of a hundred will forget all about my seven years' work, and that I started with nothing, and will point to the Consolidated as an excellent example of misdirected energy. For a little while little men will smile with commiseration and say 'He did the best he could,' but," and here Clark's voice deepened, "only for a little while. Now, friend Bowers, where do I stand with you?"

Bowers got up and paced the terrace irresolutely, glancing now and then at the motionless, gray clad figure in the wicker chair. He was suddenly and profoundly moved. In the past he had seen but one side of Clark, and this sudden depth of feeling was startling. He knew that if he still took his chief as the crowd took him, Clark would not apparently be affected in any degree, but would only classify and finally put him away with his own kind.

"Don't think for a moment I'm making any appeal," went on the steady voice. "It really doesn't matter whether you believe in me or not. There's just one thing supremely important at the present time, which is my belief in myself. That's my anchorage — it always has been and will be. I don't consider that we owe each other anything, but just the same I would like to know where you place me."

Bowers had a swift vision of what he was seven years ago, and set it against what he was now. Then, with full consciousness of the complete confidence that was placed in him by Clark, he turned and held out his hand.

THE RAPIDS

"I place you," he said a little jerkily, "just where you want to be placed."

Clark merely touched the extended fingers, but his face brightened and a smile crept into his eyes.

"I thought you did, but —" he added quizzically, "I had to work to find it out, didn't I?"

Bowers nodded. He felt like a field that had been plowed so deep that it would yield better than ever before. He reflected, too, that the experience gained in years of success should serve well in times of adversity.

"What's on the program?" he asked.

"The men will begin to drift in from the mines and lumber camps. Then it's a matter of sitting tight till they're paid off."

Bowers thrust out his lips. He had seen men come in from the woods with their pockets full of money, and that was bad enough, but without money —!

"I've had a talk with Manson who seems good for it, and the works will be under heavy guard. That's all we can do in the meantime. I'm going to Philadelphia as soon as possible."

"But not at once?"

Clark smiled. "No, not at once."

XXII.—THE MASTER MIND AT WORK

BOWERS went thoughtfully home and, next morning, flung himself into his work with renewed courage. He had need of it — they all had need of it. There were now thousands who waited for their pay, and daily these ranks were swelled by others who drifted in from the woods. Hundreds of merchants began to refuse credit, though Filmer valiantly used all his resources. St. Marys was, in truth, stupefied, and when the first shock began to smooth itself out, the reality of the thing became grimly apparent, and then arose the first rumor of trouble in Ironville, that straggling settlement of shacks where dwelt the bone and muscle of the works.

To the Swede and Polander there was no suggestion of achievement in the vast buildings in which they labored. It was only the place where they earned their living. They worked amongst giant mechanisms beside which they were puny, but theirs was a life of force and strength which took from them the fear of anything that was merely human. Thus surprise changed to resentment, and resentment began to resolve itself into a slow and consuming anger. The works were dead, but in the main office the accounting staff was bending desperately over statements imperatively demanded by Philadelphia. The black browed Hungarians saw the lights at night, and felt that they were

THE RAPIDS

being played with by those more powerful than themselves. If a furnace man was discharged, why keep on these scribblers?

Outside St. Marys the news ran apace. Toronto papers dwelt on it, and the Board of Trade read it with regret mingled with thankfulness that Clark had embarked on no financial campaigns in their own city. Thorpe went carefully over the Philadelphia acceptances in his vault, and wondered what they were worth. To St. Marys set out a stream of representatives of various creditor companies, that filled the local hotels and journeyed out to the works and came back unsatisfied. Philadelphia dispatches were devoured, and the word "reorganization" was one to charm with. One by one, the Company's steamers slid up to the long docks, made fast and drew their fires, till it seemed that the works, like a great octopus, was withdrawing every arm and filament it ever had radiated, and was coiling them endlessly at its cold and clammy side. Yet, for all of this, it did not seem possible that the whole structure was tumbling, the structure on which so many years of labor — so much genius and enthusiasm — so many millions — had been lavished, until one afternoon a drunken Swede threw a stone into a butcher's window in Ironville and, putting forth a horny hand, seized a side of bacon and set forth, reeling, down the street. Two hours later the startled chief accountant, from a window in his office, saw a swarm of a thousand men surge through the big gates of the works and, trampling the guard, flow irregularly forward.

The mob spilt on, a river of big strong men, unaware

THE MASTER MIND AT WORK

of its own strength. They were not bent on willful destruction, but the whole mass was animated by an inchoate desire to find out something for itself. At the door of the rail mill stood the superintendent and his firemen, with drawn revolvers. The rioters liked these men because they worked with and understood them. They were not associated with the present trouble. So on to the administration building, where the office staff looked out, petrified with fear. Here, the mob decided, was another breed, so there commenced a hammering on the big oaken door and stones showered through the windows.

At this, Hobbs, stricken with mortal terror, and oblivious of the girls who gathered around him, lost his head. There was no escape downstairs, but beside his desk was a grated iron window that led on to an adjoining roof. Noting it desperately, he heaved up his soft body and made a plunge for safety. But such was his bulk that, though head, arms and shoulders went through, he stuck there, anchored in an iron grip.

"Help!" he called chokingly, "Help!"

The mob looked up and stared, when from the rear ranks came a bull-like roar of laughter. Then another burst out and another, till from the ground spouted a fountain of jeers, hoots and ridicule that reached the fat man as he hung suspended, with purple face and gesticulating arms.

Clark, in his office, waiting coolly for what might come, caught the change in the note of riot and, stepping into the next room, saw the legs of his comptroller brandished in the air. The rest of him was invisible,

THE RAPIDS

and still in the square outside rocked the booming shouts of Slavic and Scandinavian mirth. A moment later Hobbs was dragged back, with torn clothing, swollen neck and scratched body. Clark glanced at him contemptuously and went out. Then the doors opened, and he was on the front steps.

The mob saw him and held its breath. Few of them had ever been so near him before. He stood with a quiet smile on his face and a light in his keen eyes, and, in the momentary hush, began to speak. There was no fear in voice or attitude. The wind, blowing from the rapids, brought the echo of their clamor to the upper windows so that the accounting staff heard not a word, but the mob heard, and presently the big Pole laughed, just as he had laughed at Hobbs' distorted face suspended above him. It was contagious, and Clark, playing upon the mood of the moment, drove home his point.

The money was coming, and he himself would stay there till it came. In the meantime, the money would be slower to arrive if there was trouble, and that was all he had to say.

There followed a little hesitation, then an indefinite movement, and the crowd began to shuffle toward the shattered gates. As it dwindled Clark glanced over his shoulder and saw a man within twenty feet, both hands thrust eloquently into his bulging coat pockets.

"Thanks very much, Belding, I'm glad it wasn't necessary," he said crisply, and vanished inside the big doors.

The engineer knew better than to follow, but was

THE MASTER MIND AT WORK

bitterly disappointed. He had hoped for some word of comfort, but to not a single employee had Clark said anything of explanation. It was not his habit, and he looked to the intelligence of each man to carry him through. And this was typical of his invariable attitude toward those with whom he came in contact. He gauged them by the degree to which they contributed to the work on hand, and just now the only work on hand was that which none but himself could carry out. In personalities Clark was not interested, but identified them only by some very definite achievement he was able to hang round their necks like a label.

Belding saw that his own offices were guarded and walked to the head of the rapids. He felt numbed. If Clark had conceived the works, he himself had built them, and, as they grew under his hand, he felt that something of his own existence went forth with every stroke of a drill, and that a fragment of his brain lay in every course of masonry. Like all true engineers, he delighted in the physical expression of his ability, and here had been such an opportunity as few engineers ever realized. He felt not so much dejected as dumb-founded that so much skill and labor could be brought to a full stop just as it reached its permanent stride. In his eyes the figure of Clark had long achieved titanic proportions. Innumerable things had been demonstrated to be possible, and to be chief engineer of such an enterprise had been, thought Belding, all that any man could ask. It was true that in the fatigue of work he had often imagined that Clark was going too fast, but always the thing had been done. Now it

THE RAPIDS

seemed the ironical jest of the gods that a shade too much carbon in a steel rail should wreck the whole endeavor.

And there was Elsie. He had never been able to give her up. Against the glamour of his chief's personality he had nothing to put forward except a whole-souled worship, and Elsie, it appeared, preferred the invitation of the older man's romantic career. Subconsciously, Belding decided that the thing was wrong and against nature, for he was marked by a certain simple belief in the general fairness of life. He clung to the doctrine of compensation, and held himself trustingly open to whatever good influences might reach him. Elsie was the highest influence of all. In Clark he had found a stimulus that nerved his brain to great accomplishments. But Elsie and Clark had together wounded his very spirit.

Clark, in the quiet of his private office, was thinking not of Belding or Elsie, but of the mob that had trailed so uncertainly out of the big gates. He had played for time and he had won — but that was all. Sooner or later, driven by the impossibility of living without pay, the mob would return, and in a less placable mood. He turned to the telephone. "I want Mr. Filmer." In a moment he was speaking to the mayor.

"What happened up here to-day is but a taste of what's coming. You'd better get out the militia, if Manson can't handle it. Bowers tells me I can do very little from a point of law, and we look to you for protection."

"The militia won't help you much." Filmer's voice

THE MASTER MIND AT WORK

was a little shaky. His son was in the militia, but he himself had never taken that body very seriously. It was a matter of uniform, a band and a field day or two in the year — that was all.

"Well, Bowers tells me that if we kill any one in protecting the place we'll have a nasty time of it, so it's up to you. If the local militia are no good, get some up from Toronto. I warn you they'll be needed. Ask Belding if you like, he saw it all."

He leaned back and began a cold blooded survey of the situation. He was not in any way desperate, but he turned involuntarily to the resources of his own brain for some solution. It was certain that no immediate help could be expected from Philadelphia. He was left quite officially and deliberately to stem the tide as best he could, and, in spite of the gravity of the moment, smiled at the thought that his directors leaned on him in their extremity. They did not know what to do, therefore he must know. Then suddenly his mind reverted to Semple, and he spent the next few moments in profound thought. "Get hold of Mr. Semple," he said to his secretary, "and bring him here."

In half an hour Semple appeared, flustered and a little pale. A visit to the works just now filled him with apprehension. It seemed like smoking in a magazine.

"What's the matter?" said Clark, smiling at his agitation.

Semple drew a long breath and, noting the thickness of the office walls, felt a little safer.

"That's what I was going to ask *you*."

THE RAPIDS

"Only a slight difficulty that you will help to put right."

Sample stared with astonishment. The bottom had apparently fallen out of the works, but Clark was as cool as ever.

"Help?" he demanded, puzzled. Clark evidently did not stand to lose much in the smash. "You're holding these fellows, aren't you?"

"Yes, for the immediate present, but we'll have to do more. That's where you come in."

The member for Algoma was at sea, and said so.

"You represent the Government here," went on Clark, "and we've spent seventeen million dollars in these works. Do you see the conclusion?"

"No, I don't."

"Your government must help us over the stile. Just so long as those men remain unpaid, life won't be very safe in St. Marys."

Sample looked round apprehensively. "But my government doesn't live here. What have I got to do with it?"

"I don't know, but, by virtue of pressure you will exert, the Government must help. What's the Liberal majority in Ontario?"

"One. I'm it."

"Then you keep the Premier in power, and he's hanging on to power like grim death."

"But I don't see —"

"It's simple enough. If you settle this affair to the satisfaction of local people, you'll secure Algoma to the Liberal party, so long as that party wants it."

THE MASTER MIND AT WORK

"By God!" said Semple, startled.

Clark apparently did not hear him. "There's another thing — to set those works in motion again will be the biggest advertisement any government in Canada ever had. It will swing the labor vote — it will secure the merchants' support." He paused, then leant forward and poured into Semple the full pressure — the accumulated effort of mind and spirit. "Ample security is available. I will make repayment the first obligation of the Company — it will forestall bonds and everything else. What I want, and what you will find for me, is only a fraction of the sum that has been put straight into this Province; and it's not much more than we have already paid in mineral and lumber dues and taxes."

"How much?" said Semple in a fascinated whisper.

"Two million dollars."

"But —"

"There aren't any buts."

"Do you owe that in wages?" Semple was aghast.

"Wages are only a small part of what must be paid at once."

"Where does Philadelphia come in?"

"Philadelphia," smiled Clark, "has left the entire matter to me in the meantime. They are making arrangements which may not be consummated for some months. We can thank a prominent American speculator for most of this. But the Province of Ontario owes us something. Doesn't it occur to you," he added slowly, "how your personal reputation will be affected?"

THE RAPIDS

Semple blinked several times and very rapidly. "I'll wire at once," he said, with a long breath.

"You'll do nothing of the kind. You'll go down yourself this afternoon. You know your man, and I know him; and he knows the works. He's been here several times. Put the matter straight,—tell him that we are dealing with forces that can only be met in one way. It's either this, or destruction and bloodshed. I've asked Filmer to wire for troops. Mr. Semple, what you are about to make is a new move on the chessboard. Your man is shrewd enough to see it, and it's the new moves that win. This is not so much politics as economics — tell him that. I'd go with you — but I must not leave St. Marys just now. Wire me as soon as possible — you've just time to catch your train."

The color climbed into Semple's cheeks, and he went quickly out with his head up. Clark glanced after him and his lips twisted into a smile.

"I give him forty-eight hours. If it doesn't come by that — we'll ring down the curtain," he said to himself thoughtfully.

He went out and walked, for hours, through the deserted buildings. They were full of hollow mockery. Watchmen, posted by Belding at strategic points, glanced after him curiously. He seemed lonely and diminutive in this mechanical wilderness of his own creation. They wondered how a man felt in such a position as his at a time like this. He dared not go to the rapids, lest he read in their uproar some new and menacing note. He thought lingeringly of Elsie.

THE MASTER MIND AT WORK

She seemed far from this crisis, and at the same time curiously a part of it. Never did he feel more certain of the girl's affection than now, and it came to him what a refuge a woman's breast might be for a man in such case as himself. In the moment his forceful brain protested at the thought of refuge.

He tramped on with a slow wonder at the magnitude of his own activities. Here and there, individual buildings stimulated poignant memories of the occasion that brought them forth. The sulphur plant assumed an aspect of derision. Beneath the huge dimensions of the head-race he seemed to discern the obliterated canal over which St. Marys came to grief. Was he himself to be brought down by its titanic successor? He stared up the lake, comparing himself with the voyageur who had once floated out of this wide immensity to trade at St. Marys. He, too, had been trading at St. Marys. "Big magic!" old Shingwauk had said, when his dark eyes beheld the works. Was it, after all, barely possible they were nothing but magic?

XXIII.—CONCERNING THE RIOT

NEXT morning came a rap at his office door and Baudette entered, treading very lightly. Clark looked up and shook his head.

"I haven't got any money yet."

"I don't want any money."

The gray eyes softened a little. "You're the only man I've met who doesn't. What is it?"

Baudette pointed out of the window.

Clark got up and glanced at the open space in front of the administration building. There lounged some fifty men, the pick of Baudette's crew, big and broad shouldered, in light colored woollen jackets, shoepacks and blazing shirts. Each toyed with an ax handle that swung lightly between strong, brown fingers. They were a loose-jointed lot, active as cats, and moved with the superlative ease of the skilled woodsman. Clark's jaw thrust out and he glanced grimly at his visitor.

"If they think they can get it that way, they're mistaken."

"You don't understand," came the even voice. "These are my friends, and yours. St. Marys is full of people who are after you. They are hungry for money, and they're coming for it. This crowd reckons their money is all right and will help you talk back."

Clark drew a long breath and caught the clear blue of Baudette's eyes. Then he nodded and began to smile.

CONCERNING THE RIOT

"Thank you, friend," he said with a catch in his breath. "I might have known it."

Hours dragged by. That night there was looting in Ironville, and the local grocers suffered a sudden depletion of stock. Morning broke, gray and threatening, while through shack and cabin an ugly temper spread steadily. Clark perceived that the real thing was coming now. Once or twice he thought of Semple, who must already be closeted with the Premier.

Just before midday a howling mob gathered swiftly outside the big gates, when instantly Baudette and his fifty axemen ran up and joined the guards. The crowd increased, and there went out an imperative summons to Manson who, with his thirty police, ranged himself half a mile away on the road to St. Marys. But for this the town was utterly unprotected. Came the pad pad of flying feet, and Fisette dashed up, swinging a prospecting pick. He grinned at the big constable.

"By Gar!" he panted, "I guess we catch hell now."

Followed a little pause, broken only by the deep threatening note of the crowd. Then Belding felt a touch on his shoulder.

"Open the gates," said Clark evenly, "I want to speak to them."

The engineer stared at the set face. His chief's eyes were like polished steel, and his jaw thrust out. There was no fear here.

"Stay inside, sir. They'll kill you."

The front rank caught sight of the erect figure. Then silence fell over them and spread slowly through

THE RAPIDS

the dark-browed multitude. Clark raised an imperative finger. The gates opened a fraction, and in front of them stood the man in whom the rioters perceived the head of their present world.

"I want to tell you that your money is coming, and that I stay here till you are paid," rang the clear voice.

For an instant there came no answer, but presently from the rear ranks rose again a bull-like roar.

"You tell us that last week."

Followed a murmur that ran through the packed mass of broad shoulders.

"I tell you again — and it's true!"

For reply, a short iron bolt came hurtling through the air. It took Clark on the cheek. He seemed not to feel it, but stood undaunted, while a trickle of blood crept down his smooth face. The sight of it seemed to rouse some latent fury in the mob, and a deep growl sounded ominously. He felt himself jerked suddenly back, and Belding and Baudette jumped in front of him. The woodsman balanced a great shining axe, and the engineer's automatic gleamed dully.

"Get inside, sir, quick!"

For the first time in his life, Clark felt himself passed from hand to hand, and landed, fuming, on the other side of the big gates. The voice of the mob lifted to an infuriated howl. Simultaneously the rear ranks pressed forward.

Fighting began the next instant. Belding's revolver barked viciously, while he shot low at legs and feet. Three men went down to be engulfed in the oncoming tide. Baudette was standing firm, his cold blue eyes

CONCERNING THE RIOT

alight with the fire of battle. His broad axe was cutting swift circles around him, while he dodged a shower of missiles. To right and left of him fifty axe handles rose and fell like flails, and behind them was all the skill and sinew of those who dwell amongst big timber. Then a jagged fragment of iron casting took Baudette on the knee, and he went down.

The battle grew, while the faithful ranks thinned visibly. Just through the big gates lay the battlemented works, and toward them pressed the mob, now drunk with the hunger to destroy. At the moment when it seemed that the living barrier must collapse, the rioters wheeled to meet a new attack. With the sound of fighting, Marson pushed on and now struck hard. His thirty constables set their batons going, and there came the heavy crack of loaded wood on thick skulls. Fisette, his eyes gleaming, was tapping like a deadly woodpecker with his pick, and the impetus of this onslaught drove a formidable wedge into the surging mass. Manson's great voice bellowed unspeakable things in the lust of combat, his dark visage distorted, his mighty body gathered into a great, human battering ram.

Presently the constable too went down with a shattered arm, and the line of police shortened and curved. Fisette found himself throttled by a muscular arm which shot round his neck, and two minutes later they were surrounded and fighting for their lives.

The battle surged and palpitated. What remained of Baudette's axemen were behind the big gates, where Belding had dragged the prostrate foreman. Clark

THE RAPIDS

stood in absolute calmness, though he knew that presently this barrier would be battered down.

Belding drew a long breath and shot a fascinated glance at his chief. It flashed into his mind that Clark was getting punishment now, not only in the eyes of the world, but also in the eyes of the man from whom he had taken that which was dearest and best. But his leader's gaze was as clear as ever.

"It can't last much longer, sir," he shouted through the uproar. His automatic was empty, and he could only watch the front rank of rioters pick up a great baulk of timber and balance it opposite the gates. Then a sudden chill struck to his very soul. What would happen in St. Marys?

Clark, staring at him, just as suddenly perceived what was in his mind.

"Take my launch," he called into his ear. "You can land at the house. Hurry! Don't mind about me."

Belding hung for a moment in frantic uncertainty, and shook his head. He was next in command here, but a short mile away was his heart's desire, defenseless, save for what resistance could be hastily organized in the town. It was questionable what that was worth, and his whole soul commanded him to go to her. For an instant he felt sick, then over him flooded the cold conviction that, even though he saved Clark for Elsie, he must stay and see this thing through.

Suddenly from far down the road came a sharp rattle, that pierced the uproar and brought a grim, inflexible message. Clark heard it, and over his face stole

CONCERNING THE RIOT

an expression of relief. The mob heard it, and through their surging ranks ran that which sobered and cooled their fury. Manson, prostrate and bloody, heard it, and Fisette, and all the others who had fought, it seemed, their last fight. The rioters began to dissipate like blown leaves in autumn, and a rippling line of infantry in open formation moved rhythmically up the road from St. Marys.

Clark drew a long breath and looked curiously at his engineer.

"You saved my life, Belding." He hesitated a moment, and added thoughtfully, "Now, why should you want to do that?"

Belding stared and a lump rose in his throat. He had lost and yet he had won,—been defeated and yet had risen to something bigger than he had ever achieved before. He could face the future now, even though it were written that he should face it alone. He tried to speak, then turned on his heel and walked towards the dock, where Clark's fast launch lay glinting in the sun.

The gray eyes followed him in profound contemplation. Presently Clark smiled, it seemed a little sadly, and advanced to the officer commanding the troops. Baudette was sitting up. Manson, his face gray with pain, was nursing a dangling arm, and round them the derelicts of battle were strewn grotesquely. But it was Fisette who spoke first.

"By Gar!" he said with flashing teeth, "she's one big fight, eh!"

Silence spread again over the works. An armed

THE RAPIDS

picket was left at the big gates, while the rest of the troops patrolled suddenly deserted streets in Ironville. In the accounting office there began again the clicking of typewriters, and Clark, at his desk, dictated a dispatch to Philadelphia. This done, he fell into a mood of strange abstraction. The car of destiny was traveling fast.

Just then the telephone rang, and he took up the receiver automatically. As in a dream Elsie's voice came in, tremulous but very clear. He smiled wearily as he listened.

"Thank you very much," he said in answer. "There is really no serious damage done, except to a few foolish heads; and," he added, "please thank Mr. Belding again for me.— yes, he'll understand."

A hush fell in the office again, and he felt inexpressibly alone. He was not in any sense hopeless, being assured that in the vast machine of his own creation were inherent qualities of life that could never be extinguished. He was strong, since for himself he desired nothing. In this hour of uncertainty his imagination traveled far, but again and again it was captured by the remembrance of his days with the bishop. This had nothing to do with works, and yet in a way they were intimately connected. The bishop had demonstrated the operation of high and subtle forces to which he himself had not given much thought. The bishop had saved his life, just as Belding had saved it, and he still seemed to feel the working of big muscles under his twitching palms. There flashed back what the prelate had said about being prepared for the worst,

CONCERNING THE RIOT

which after all was sometimes the best, and, with half closed eyes, he wondered whether this was the occasion. There sounded a knock at the door, and the bishop himself came in.

Clark, getting up hastily, advanced to meet him. There were only three people in the world he would have cared to see at that moment, and here was one of them.

"Come in and sit down, sir. This is very good of you."

"It took me two hours to get here," said the big man, breathing a little hard. "It's rather difficult traveling to-day."

Clark stared at him. He had always thought of the bishop as an exemplar of peace, but he had arrived almost on the tail of the riot.

"I only reached town a short time ago," the visitor was smiling cheerfully, "and heard about the trouble. Now that I'm safely here, I'll only stay a minute."

Clark shook his head. "You are very welcome, sir."

The bishop nodded contentedly. "I just wanted to express my sympathy with your present anxiety, and my belief that everything will come all right."

"You do believe that?"

"Unquestionably. Such efforts as yours are not foredoomed. I see you, too, are of my opinion."

"I have to be," said Clark reflectively.

"I'm not at all surprised, since you can turn to the physical evidence of your own efforts to support you. It gives you an advantage over myself."

"Does it?"

THE RAPIDS

The visitor pointed to the mass of buildings close at hand. "You have all that, and there is no doubt that inanimate things possess a peculiar influence, either strengthening or otherwise. But still I can quite imagine what it means to you to sit here and listen to silence with so many reminders about you. It is one of the things that the servants of humanity must occasionally face."

"Servants?" said Clark curiously.

"Is not a leader also a servant. Has he anything left for himself, and is it not just a different term for the same thing?"

The other man experienced a strange sensation that he had discovered this a long time ago. The bishop had also discovered it, but had not forgotten.

"I have it in my mind that there is another reason why you should not be depressed," went on the prelate assuringly. "You have always demanded too much of yourself; and while you are many kinds of a man you cannot be all kinds."

This was also true. "Go on, sir."

"I have developed no commercial ability, but admit a strong commercial interest, and sometimes think I could have been a good business man myself. I roughly divide them into two classes,—one very large and the other very small."

"Successful and unsuccessful, I assume?"

The bishop's face was very thoughtful. "That depends on what you mean by 'success.' Wealth, for instance, does not necessarily stand for success. You, if I may say so, are a practical idealist, and you have

CONCERNING THE RIOT

faith in your dream. You have achieved a vision revealed to few men's eyes and —"

A gentle knock at the door cut him short. The secretary came in with a telegram, and something in the face of the latter made Clark's heart leap within him. A few seconds later he placed the yellow slip in the bishop's hands, and gazed at him with twinkling eyes.

Ontario government advances two million on offered security and has notified your bank.

SEMPLE.

The bishop read it over slowly. "How can I congratulate you? What splendid news!"

"You have congratulated me."

"Eh! When?"

"You said I had faith in my dream. Now I beg of you not to move, but just see how things work."

In the course of the next ten minutes, the prelate saw Clark in swift action. Automatically the clear brain marshaled all the pressing duties of the moment and discharged them in quick succession. Messages to Filmer, to the military authorities, to various impatient creditors, were dispatched, for in this masterful hand was gathered every filament through which a vitalizing energy would again permeate the works. The flexible intellect of the man worked with a precision that was impressive. Presently the bishop rose to go. He stood, an imposing figure, animated with benign understanding and good will.

"Good-by, till we meet again. I rejoice with you in what has just taken place, but you are a prophet and

THE RAPIDS

all prophets are on a precarious pedestal. Had you been in the pursuit of wealth I could not have talked as I have to-day."

Clark did not answer, and in the hush the voice of the rapids lifted a melodious chorus.

"But after all does it matter how deep the water through which any man passes if the community at large benefits?"

"I don't know what they would say to that in Philadelphia."

"Possibly, but in an economic sense what has happened is that some of the wealth of Philadelphia has been transferred here. This will be a few weeks' sensation — and then will follow a fresh one. That is of the nature of things. But long after you and I have moved on, the forests and mines of this district will be adding to the strength of the country. Those men who have backed you have contributed with you and made it possible. Mr. Clark, I have no fear for the future of the works or of yourself."

Clark's lips curved into a rare smile. "Neither have I, sir."

His visitor departed, and he got on to the Philadelphia wire with the curt information that two million dollars had been secured from the Ontario government, and asked permission to continue work. Simultaneously the news spread like a forest fire. The militia found there was nothing to contend with. Merchants surveyed their looted stores and swore vengeance, but in a modern Arcadia one cannot arrest two thousand foreigners. There were blocks of buildings with fronts

CONCERNING THE RIOT

smashed in ; dangling knots of wire ; prostrate electric light poles ; scattered stones and bolts and shivered fences, but the rioters, to a man, were back, dandling their babies and waiting for the morrow. It was as though a hurricane had blown fiercely through the town, and then died over the encircling hills. And in the bank office Brewster was thoughtfully reading two telegrams from Thorpe, one commending his attitude for the past few weeks, the other authorizing him to credit the Consolidated account with two million dollars.

A few days later Wimperley and Birch arrived. It was their answer to Clark's suggestion that work be continued without delay and, as usual, he quite correctly interpreted the manner of their reply. His energy had saved the situation which it had created, but, in spite of this, there was a new spirit in the financial circles of Philadelphia. He was dubbed a dangerous man. He was, they considered, too swift as well as too hypnotic. To continue to identify themselves with his undertakings was deliberately boarding a runaway train. Added to this, the interlinking of companies which had been presumed to be a factor of strength was now shown as an element of weakness. When one lost money, all lost it.

When Wimperley, unfolding his mind steadily and without interruption, told Clark that the old régime was at an end, the latter, at first, was not much impressed. But gradually the case became clearer.

"I don't say we don't trust you," he said, "but candidly, we're afraid of you. Just two things are needed

THE RAPIDS

to secure the operation of the works,— new money and new management; and it's possible the new crowd won't want you. Philadelphia has been sucked dry so far as concerns us."

"Any suggestions?" put in Clark quietly.

"Not yet. We're in correspondence with London people, and they'll probably come out. When they do," continued Wimperley, eying the other man meaningly, "we'll turn them over to you."

"Is that it?" The voice had a profundity of meaning.

Wimperley nodded. "I thought you'd understand. You got us in, and now you've got to pull us out."

"And pull myself out too," said Clark dryly. "Thanks."

"Would you prefer that the works stay idle with you or get busy without you?" interjected Birch pointedly.

"When it comes to that — if it does — I'll let you know. In the meantime —?"

"Don't turn a wheel except for town utilities, and now we'd like to see Bowers. You probably don't realize what we've been through in Philadelphia. Consolidated isn't what you'd call gilt edged just now, and the corners are knocked off our reputation as business men. I just mention this in case you feel aggrieved."

Clark grinned suddenly. "I'm not worrying either about my stock or my business reputation. Your difficulty is that you don't see why any one else should pull through where we didn't."

Wimperley nodded. "There's something in that."

CONCERNING THE RIOT

What we've got now is the job of making Consolidated stock worth something — by earnings. It means cutting out the dead wood — our own dead wood, and I don't fancy the contract. It hurts to chop down the tree you helped to plant — but it's the only way out of it. There will probably be months before this machine will start up again, and move toward permanent success."

A day or two afterwards the two directors went back to Philadelphia, where they reported to Stoughton and Riggs that the screws were on tight. Save only the pumps and generators, not a wheel turned in the Consolidated. Birch's conclusion was that millions more were needed. Consolidated stock settled down to a nominal value that fluctuated with conflicting reports of new capital having been found, but the whole affair was flat — indescribably flat. And meantime Birch — with the unprofitable burden on his shoulders — made pilgrimages to test the financial pulse, and for months returned empty handed.

In St. Marys it seemed that Arcadia might be re-born,— not the old time Arcadia with its sleepy village atmosphere, but a modern one in which folk made up their minds to live on the profits of past years. The car service was reduced, and half the street lamps removed. There were empty houses in the new streets, and the property which once passed through Manson's hands could have been re-bought at the original price. Filmer and the rest reduced their stock, while the whole overbuilt, overgrown town settled down to wait till, after a weary interval, Clark got off the train with

THE RAPIDS

two strangers and drove up to the big house on the hill. In half an hour Bowers, who was expecting them, completed the quartet.

It was an unusual group that gathered that night in the dining room. Ardsweil and Weatherby had spent a week in Philadelphia before Wimperley telegraphed Clark to come down. The story was plain enough. The two Englishmen had come from London to hear it,— and it was told well. But Wimperley and Birch shared the belief that Clark, in the meantime, should be kept in the background, lest his hypnosis should envelop them as of old. They held him, as it were, a reserve store of influence to be used at the proper time, and it was not till the financial aspect of the affair was thoroughly digested that he was called in to play his appointed part.

Ardsweil and Weatherby wanted to see whether the machine could be made to run commercially. That it was not so running was obviously the fault of those in charge, and Clark at once determined not to attempt to make former mistakes less glaring. The more obvious they were allowed to remain, the more easy their rectification. He was too much in love with the works to dodge this sacrifice, and yet could not conceive their continuing without him.

Assuming this onerous duty, he was perfectly aware that he dealt with minds of a new complexion. Instead of responsive Americans, he confronted two cool-blooded Britishers, to whom any show of spontaneity was out of place. They were on guard, and Clark knew it, and of all his achievements none stands

CONCERNING THE RIOT

out more prominently than his attitude on the three days that followed. He became a Britisher himself. He assumed, quite correctly, that nothing would be accepted without proof.

Tramping about the works, they were accompanied by the superintendents of the various departments, to whom he referred the pointed questions that came so frequently in high-pitched, well modulated English voices. What Clark said himself was very curt and to the point. The works, he decided, could talk for themselves. Coming last to the pulp mill, Ards well ran an admiring eye down the long rank of machinery, ranged like sleeping giants in a dwindling perspective.

"I say," he remarked involuntarily, "I'd like to see the thing turn over. Could it be arranged? — at our expense of course," he added.

Clark nodded to the superintendent, who was close behind, and presently the day watchmen were twisting at the turbine gate wheels. A soft tremor ran through the building, growing steadily to a deep, hoarse rumble as the massive grindstones revolved faster. The floor vibrated in a quick rhythm, and in a few seconds came the full drone of work — that profound and elemental note of nature when she toils at the behest of man.

The faintest flicker of light stirred in the blue English eyes. Ards well had been walking from turbine to turbine. "Ripping!" he said. "You might shut down now."

The titans dropped one by one into slumber. When the last vibration was stilled, he looked up with a new respect. "We might go ahead if you don't mind."

THE RAPIDS

"Take a quarter of an hour first, and follow me."

They struck southward, and the Englishmen heard the boom of the rapids deepen till they came to the edge of the river at Clark's observation point. There was a strong easterly wind, and it caught at the snowy crests of the bigger waves, spinning them out like silver manes of leaping horses. These flashed in the sunlight, till, over the central ridge of water, the air was full of a fine, misty spray that hung palpitating and luminous. Here was a torrential life — born of the endless and icy leagues of Lake Superior.

The two strangers stared fascinated, and as Clark watched them he perceived that once more the ageless voice of the rapids was speaking to human ears, just as it had spoken to his own so many times — and years before. He waited patiently, while the river lifted its elemental message, and saw the color rise in English cheeks and the cold, blue English eyes begin to sparkle again. What were the drab records of Birch's ledgers, or even the monumental pile of nearby buildings, compared to this impetuous slogan? He stood silently, plunged in the psychology of the moment.

"How much power — total I mean?" said Ardsweil presently, pointing to the ripping flood.

"Two hundred and forty thousand horsepower, at a minimum."

"By George!"

Silence fell again, till Weatherby, shaking the spray from his rough tweed coat, got up a little stiffly.

"I begin to understand a little better now," he said slowly with an eloquent glance.

CONCERNING THE RIOT

The car was waiting for them by the little lock — and here at the block house the visitors displayed marked animation. Clark told them the story very simply as they rolled off up the hill for lunch.

"There's one man, the chief engineer, Belding — you met him at the head gates — that I would like to be remembered should we do business," he concluded very thoughtfully. "Belding was my first employee. I picked him up in St. Marys and he has stuck to it nobly. I probably gave him far too much to do, but he never squealed; and there are other reasons."

Weatherby looked up. "That's the big, fair haired chap we saw go off in the canoe?"

"Yes."

"Well," put in Ardsweil tersely, "it will probably all depend on yourself."

XXIV.— DESTINY

UP in the big bay that lies next the head of the rapids, Belding was drifting aimlessly. He was still obsessed with a sense of the hideous uselessness of effort, and wanted to be alone. At one time Elsie used to be here in the bow of the canoe, but now it seemed that Elsie had little thought for him. And yet he could have sworn that, two years ago, she loved him.

He began to paddle, with a sharp and growing resentment, and found a deep satisfaction in the thrust of his broad blade. Soon he was nearly half way across the river, and a mile down stream lifted the fabric of the great bridge. Slacking speed, he caught the pull of the current, and with it came a reckless impulse. No man had shot the middle of the rapids and escaped with his life. It was true that the Indians maneuvered their long canoes down close to the opposite shore with venturous tourists, but it was only a film of water that wound, bubbling, near the land. With the deep-throated rumble only half a mile away, Belding felt his pulse falter for a second, then pound viciously on. And in that second, with the bravado of early manhood, he threw discretion overboard, and set the slim bow of his Peterboro' for the middle span. Twenty seconds, later he knew that he was about to run the rapids — whether he would or not.

Settling himself amidship, he gripped the thwart tight

DESTINY

between calf and thigh and, resting the paddle across the gunwale, peered anxiously forward. His lips were a little dry, but he felt no fear. Being close to the water, he could not see the rapids themselves but only the first great, green curve, and below it the white tops of a multitude of waves. Then the middle span swept back overhead, he heard the river, split by the sharp piers, hissing along their rough sides and the canoe sailed like a leaf into the first smooth dip. Came the vision of a distant shore sliding by, and the lower reach with a ferry steamer halfway across, and Belding felt the canoe lift and quiver, while a green wave flung its white crest in his face. He came through rather than over it, and just below caught a glimpse of one of those dreaded cellars that hid themselves in this tumult. Here, at all costs, he must keep straight.

The canoe, with no way on, swooped giddily into the great, emerald pit. There was a fleeting sensation of smooth, glittering, watery walls, till he was flung on and up into the backward foaming crest, and with a desperate effort wrenched the slim bow so that it took the rise head on. An instant followed in which the sky was blotted out, while on each side rose pyramids of bubbling foam that seemed to meet over his head, but between which he could see light and distance. The canoe, half full of water, was plucked onward, while Belding drew a long breath and searched the chaos in front of him.

Fifty yards down, opened a lane of green that curved beside and between two cellars, each deeper than the last. He knew instantly that he could not survive these,

THE RAPIDS

and, with every ounce of his strength, drove across the broken river to the head of the chute. Making it in the nick of time, he plunged in, with the water sucking at his thighs, and the sinews in his arms burning like fire. There followed a swift descent through cellars of dwindling depth, till he floated into the long, spume-flecked swells at the foot of the decline, where the canoe drifted sluggishly, full nearly to the gunwale. And here Belding leaned forward with his hands on her curved thwart, and pumped great gulps of air into his empty lungs. Presently he stared around. He was below the works of which he had seen nothing, and just opposite Clark's big house, whose roof lifted on the hill side a mile away. He had dared the rapids and come through safely, but Clark, he reflected, was engulfed.

Luncheon that day at the big house had been a silent affair, after which the three men went out on the terrace and examined the panorama that spread to the south. It was suggestive and inspiring. They had been voiceless for some time, when Clark moved restlessly.

"Shall we talk here, or go back to the office?"

"This is good enough for me," said Ardsweil; "are you ready for business?"

"Certainly."

"And may I ask two questions first,—one is a trifle personal?"

"Please ask them, if you wish; I have no personal secrets."

"That's very decent of you. What I'd like to know

DESTINY

is, first, what you found here when you arrived seven years ago, and, second, what your resources were at the time? You will not, of course, answer the last unless you wish."

Clark laughed almost boyishly. "Why I found only the rapids, and — I had no resources,— that is, except myself."

"I thought so, and"—here the speaker glanced at Weatherby—"we would like to congratulate you. I had an idea that this was the case. Now as to the present business, we have decided to make a proposal to your board."

"I am glad of that," said Clark briefly. He knew that the moment had come.

"We hope it will meet with your support," Ards-well hesitated perceptibly and went on, pitching his voice a little higher, "and you will not misunderstand my putting it rather baldly. The matter depends on two things: the reduction of the Consolidated capital from twenty-seven million to something about ten million and the wiping out of all common stock, and," here he paused again while the blood crept slowly to his temples—"the other is a change in the executive. These being satisfactorily arranged, we will go ahead. That's about it, eh?"

"Yes," put in the other, "but of course we could not go ahead, under any circumstances, without Mr. Clark's temporary assistance. I think in fairness to him we should make the case a little clearer."

"It's fairly clear as it is," said Clark without a trace of emotion.

THE RAPIDS

"We've never seen anything quite like this in any part of the world," volunteered Weatherby, "and it is a remarkable thing for any one man to have imagined and accomplished. Whether or not we take the matter up, it will always seem a catastrophe that your work and the work of your directors should have been interrupted by a speculator. That's one thing that strikes us both about American business — you have your lions, and plenty of them, but you have too many wolves. Now, coming back to St. Marys, I beg that you won't misunderstand me when I say that the originator of great things is very seldom a suitable executive for permanent administration. It is too much to expect. In case we take this up it would be necessary for us to have the administration in our own hands. You understand, of course, that an originator of big things is a much rarer person than a good executive, and it is largely on account of non-imaginative qualities that the latter is the safer man. I would like to assure you," he concluded with evident respect, "that we have never experienced more difficulty in making a suggestion. The case is extraordinary — we realize that."

"What Weatherby has in his head," added Ards-well, "is that you have done what neither of us could ever have done, and he thinks it a waste of valuable material to try and make an executive out —"

"Out of me," interrupted Clark. "You may be quite right." He had expected to feel alone, but the direct simplicity of these men appealed to him. It was not always, he reflected, that he was given an un-

DESTINY

prejudiced opinion, and he felt the safer since now he got it.

"We believe that we are right," it was Weatherby who spoke, "and are prepared to assume that responsibility. Like you, we have shareholders to think of, and we feel that yours will not get any better offer. We know the financial world fairly well."

Clark listened tensely. He was aware that the interests represented by these two were of enormous influence and wealth. He realized, also, that instead of all this discussion, Wimperley might simply have notified him that he was discharged, and that the new interests would now take over. But Wimperley had done nothing of the kind.

"One week in Philadelphia taught us much, but we have learned a great deal more up here," continued Weatherby, "and it depended really on the past three days whether we would make a proposal or not. From what we have seen and what you have told us, we are satisfied. I might say that your directors have already agreed to the reduction of capital, provided the matter of management is settled. So the future lies entirely with you. Your holdings in common stock are so large that it is essential you give your formal assent."

Clark drew a long breath. He had come to the fork in the road. The labors of seven years rolled suddenly over his brain and engulfed it. Here were two men who drank his wine, then asked him to leave his very soul to others.

"Gentlemen," he said slowly, "thank you for what

THE RAPIDS

you have said — but I can't give you an answer at once."

"There's no hurry," replied Ardsweil. "It's not a case for a snap decision."

Through Clark's mind ran a quizzical idea that these two understood each other admirably, and he wondered how things would have turned out had he himself been one of a pair that did such team work.

"Then later, to-night."

The two nodded and moved off, talking earnestly, while Clark experienced a strange breathlessness. His soul was in tumult, and he reacted from the strain of the past few days. He perceived that with men like himself and his visitors lay the great economic forces of the world. And yet he was expected to make way.

Passing slowly through the big gates, towards which he had walked automatically, he moved on beyond the pulp mills towards the rapids, as though drawn by their insistent call. It was the call he had heard for years, even in his very dreams. And there, on the great boulder where he had once found her before, sat Elsie.

She had been there for an hour, gazing at the tumbled mass of foam and trying desperately to disentangle her thoughts. But even as she gazed, Clark's face seemed to come in between; keen, strong, undefeated and suggestive. It was not till now that she admitted to her own soul that he had dominated her imagination for months past. His achievements, his peculiar independence, his swift versatility had captured her crescent ambition, the ambition which he himself had unwittingly stimulated. She did not question whether this

DESTINY

was love, she only knew that in this season, when his work seemed to be tottering over his head, she was ready to come to him and help rebuild it into something stronger and even greater.

She did not start, but looked at him with a strange satisfaction, as though it were meant from the first that they should meet at this time and place. Her eyes were very grave, and in them was that which made Clark's pulse beat faster. Something whispered that each of them had been saved over for this moment.

"I haven't seen much of you for the past few months," he said presently.

"I know that, but I know why. Are things better now?"

He nodded. "They may be very shortly."

"I'm so glad. You can't imagine how anxious I've been,—the riots and your escape — and —"

"But I was anxious for you."

"You shouldn't have been," she said gently. "Mr. Belding told me that you wanted him to come to the house when things were at their worst, but he didn't like leaving you. Now tell me, are the works starting up again?"

Clark drew a long breath. "I'll know very soon."

"Then you'll settle down just like before, and it will be all a bad dream?"

"Perhaps I will." His voice lifted a little.

"You're not going away?"

That was what he had come here to decide, and there flashed into his mind a curious conception that was both fanciful and reassuring.

THE RAPIDS

"Forget about the works for a moment; I want to ask you something."

"But do I know?" She smiled doubtfully.

"Yes, you'll know without any question whatever. It's the case of a man who worked very hard, and he didn't work for money or glory, or anything of that kind, but just because he loved it and couldn't help it."

"That sounds very like yourself."

"There are many men like that, more than most people imagine," he said quietly; "and after this one had, so to speak, built the foundations and walls, he had not money enough to put on the roof, and another man came along and offered to do it. Of course, he would get the credit for the whole building. It was a very important one, and it affected the lives and comfort of a great many people who would suffer if it were not completed."

The girl glanced at him strangely. "Is that all?"

"Yes, except that the people who lived there would naturally forget all about the man who laid the foundations and built the walls, and would even blame him and think only of the one who made the place habitable for them."

"But does that matter?" she asked quickly, looking at him.

Clark took a long look at the animated face. "That he should be forgotten or blamed?"

"Yes. You said he worked for the love of it. He didn't ask for thanks or appreciation, and from what you tell me he wasn't that kind." She turned swiftly: "It is yourself."

DESTINY

"And if it were, that would not alter your judgment, would it?"

"Is it fair to ask?" Her eyes were full of a touching appeal.

"A frank opinion is the fairest thing to me," he said quietly. "I know how you would look at it. There's only one answer you could give. If it were otherwise it wouldn't be you: the first man has no alternative, has he?"

"No," she whispered. Her face was pitiful, as though she had been secretly and cruelly hurt.

"Then it is the works I'm considering," he continued slowly. "You're the only one I can tell just now, but if they go on, it must be without me."

"But they're your works. You dreamed them and then built them."

"I've had many dreams, Elsie."

Her heart beat rapturously. It was the first time he had called her Elsie, and her spontaneous spirit went out to this man who stood facing so great and sacrificial a decision. She longed to spend herself upon him. Involuntarily she glanced up with profound pity and, turning, caught a glimpse of a canoe that whipped down stream under the middle span of the great bridge.

"Oh, look! he's going to be drowned." She clutched Clark's arm in sudden terror.

The latter stared, while something rose in his throat. The canoe was familiar. He had seen it a few hours before on the upper bay, and now his keen sight made out the figure of Belding. Instantly he grasped the cause of this foolhardy deed. A glance at Elsie told

THE RAPIDS

him she was unaware who it was that thus played with death.

"Look, look!" she cried again.

The canoe pitched into the first cellar, and in the mound of silver foam they could discern only the slim and tossing bow. Presently it emerged and reeled on into the fury below. Elsie covered her eyes, and Clark stood as though fascinated. What part had he played in this perilous drama?

Vividly his mind flashed back to those first days, the beginning of the engineer's unswerving loyalty. Year after year he had never faltered, and at the end of it all, even though apparently robbed by his chief of his heart's desire, had thrust himself between Clark and the hoarse hatred of the mob. Came now an overwhelming sense of unworthiness, and Clark asked of himself who was he to demand such sacrifice. Then, as though a cloud had revealed the sun, the way became quite clear.

"Elsie," he said, "the canoe is all right, look!"

Down in the long, smooth swell at the foot of the rapids, it lay sluggishly. The man dipped his paddle and began to move almost imperceptibly towards shore. The girl drew a long breath.

"He's safe."

"Yes," said Clark earnestly, "he's very safe. Now I want to talk to you."

She brightened at once. "Do."

"I've wanted to talk to you for months. Do you remember what we spoke of last?"

"Destiny," she said softly.

DESTINY

He nodded. "I see it plainly to-day, more plainly than ever before. Sometimes when a man is in deep water his sight gets keener. What I have been through in the last seven years is only a phase, it's not an epoch. I was meant to do it, and I did it with all my heart. Now I'm going to do something else, in order that the works may prosper. You have helped me to make that decision."

"I?" she whispered faintly.

He put a hand on her arm — it was his only caress.

"Yes, Elsie, you. It is as though I had caught sight of a road which was very beautiful and tender, and I was tempted to take it. But it is not my road. What the future has left for me I don't know, but it is not here and I must meet it alone."

He paused for a moment, and the girl's brown eyes filled with tears. Presently the steady voice continued.

"Destiny is calling, and one cannot take a girl into a battlefield, for that is what it is going to be. I'm a poor man again, Elsie, just as I was seven years ago. That does not matter, for I will be rich in memories."

"Don't," she said brokenly, "don't!"

"Youth will go to youth, Elsie."

"You mean —"

"I mean that the man you really love, is the man you saw run the rapids."

"Jim!" Her eyes were round with terror.

"Yes, Jim, the best friend but one I found in St. Marys. Jim, full of loyalty and courage and energy; Jim who wanted to give his life for mine, though he thought he'd lost you. He had never really lost you,

THE RAPIDS

Elsie. The road that led to you seemed so attractive that I hesitated, till now I see that it was Jim's road. It always was."

In the silence that followed she lifted her exquisite face. Her lips were parted, and in her gaze was a light that came as through dissolving mist. And then into their very souls crept the voice of the rapids. Clark caught it, and perceived that the call was not for him alone but for thousands yet unborn, and there began to creep over him the ineffable unction of labor. He realized how large was the world, and how much work yet remained to be done. His spirit was not solitary, but linked forever with eternal realities, and through the cloud that obscured the present he could see his star of destiny shining undimmed.

And Elsie! Elsie sat, her whole being shaken with overwhelming emotion. Never had she so longed to be everything to this man as now when, with prophetic power, his vibrant voice told her that he must journey on alone. In his accents she recognized the note of fate, and the ground shifted under her feet. She saw her dream dissolving. She perceived that against his lofty spirit she herself must oppose nothing small and selfish, however poignant the moment. Summoning all her fortitude, she stretched out her hand.

He stood for a moment, and she felt the pressure of his grasp. It was warm and confident. When she looked up she was alone.

It was hours afterwards that Ardsweil and Weatherby lounged at their windows, overhanging the terrace. They were in dressing gowns and smoking

DESTINY

contemplative pipes. Down below was seated a motionless gray clad figure, clearly outlined in the moonlight. Ardswell saw him.

"Poor devil!" he said under his breath.

XXV.—THE UNCONQUERABLE SPIRIT

TWO years later, Belding and Elsie were returning from Chicago, where the former had been purchasing machinery for the new company, of which he was chief engineer. Time had done well for them and for St. Marys. The six months' physical inactivity of the works were spent wisely, if ruthlessly, in weeding out unfertile growths and concentrating resources on those which were sound and promising. There was a sharp distinction between this deliberate policy and the restless activity that preceded it.

St. Marys, too, had caught its breath and taken on permanency. There were no more surprises. The works became a factory, instead of a Pandora's box, full of the unexpected. Property was stable, if lower than the high water mark, while Filmer and the rest settled down to steady business, somewhat forgetful of the man to whom were due the first tendrils of the tree of progress.

But Belding, growing constantly in mental stature, could never forget. His own position — his development — his authority, had come of the abiding faith bestowed on him nine years ago by one whom he had then seen but for ten minutes. And as often as he saw the works the realization came over him. How many others, he wondered, felt as he did?

They were approaching St. Marys, and, coming out

THE UNCONQUERABLE SPIRIT

of the dining car with Elsie, he steadied her to their seat. Night was drawing on, but the car remained unlighted, and simultaneously they noticed a man sitting across the aisle, staring intently out of the window. Something familiar in the figure caught their attention.

"It's Mr. Clark," he whispered to his wife.

She glanced across, and her fingers tightened on his arm.

"Don't speak to him, Jim."

"Why?"

"Look at him, can't you see?"

Belding looked. Clark was absolutely motionless, and had not changed a fraction in two years. The train moved on, till it halted for a few moments on the great bridge. The air was cool and full of the deep roar of the rapids, and the car vibrated delicately with the huge steel girders on which it rested. Two hundred feet away came the first, smooth dip that Belding would always remember. Immediately beneath, he had slid into the chaos further on.

The two young people did not stir, but watched the silent observer. Against the window they caught the dominant nose, the clean cut, powerful chin, the aggressive contour of head and shoulders. Clark was leaning forward, his gaze exploring the well remembered scene.

"Don't disturb him," whispered Elsie again.

Her husband pressed her hand, and they waited, wondering what thoughts were passing through that marvelous brain. He was staring at the works. It was all his — this dream come true; this vision portrayed

THE RAPIDS

in steel and stone. Out of nothing but water and wood and his own superb faith he had created it, only to see this exemplification of himself slip from his own hands into those of others, who had sponsored neither its birth nor its magnificent development. What portion of his leader, pondered the engineer, had been incorporated in those vast foundations — and what had life left in store to replace them for him?

The train was moving on, when Clark, turning suddenly, smiled and held out his hand.

"Glad to see you both, if only for a minute. I'm on my way back to Russia, where I'm carrying out large improvements for the government — been there for the last year. By the way, Belding, did you notice that old, crooked birch beside the rapids? A big, fat kingfisher used to live there — we knew each other well."

CONCLUSION

THE sumac leaves, which through the summer months tapped delicately at my study window, have turned a vivid scarlet, and one by one have fluttered to the ground. Here, by the mysterious process of nature, they will be incorporated with the rich soil, to nourish some other life that will later climb sunward. But in that life no one shall recognize a sumac leaf.

So it seems are the efforts of men. A few years of growth and aspiration — then the fiery bourgeoning to a climax, and, after that, incorporation in the soil of a forgetfulness that seems indifferent alike to their exertions and their ambitions. But the end is not here. Somewhere, and most certainly in some other form, the effort achieves immortality and reasserts itself, indestructible and eternal. For such are the myriad filaments of existence, and so indissolubly are men linked with each other by invisible chains, that it is but seldom that impulse can be traced back to its birth, or courage to its starting point.

Who then shall determine what is success and what is failure? Does the grandeur of the reward establish the value of the service, or is it not true that, in the mysterious cycle of time, the richest field is not seldom sown by hands that have been without honor or recognition in their season? Does wealth or authority spell success, or is it the meed of those who have given rather

THE RAPIDS

than taken, who have toiled on the mountain side rather than sought the peaks of publicity? Clark came to St. Marys a poor man, and he left it no whit the richer. What he made, he spent. And when the day of his departure dawned, he went as one who had attempted and failed, carrying with him the resentment of those who lost, and few thanks from those who profited.

But did Clark actually fail?

To-day the mines of Algoma are supplying steel rails for Asiatic railways; the forests about St. Marys are yielding pulp for Australia, and the great power house is sending carbide to the mines of India. This and much more is the fruit of vision. What matter that Philadelphia stormed, and that the reins of government were snatched from those masterful hands? The dream has come true.

Consider for a moment this man, who is stranger to most. He desired neither wealth nor ease, being filled with a vast hunger for creation, and to forest, mountain and river he turned with confidence and abiding courage. It was as though nature herself had whispered misty secrets in his ear. Being a prophet, he suffered like a prophet, but the years, rolling on, have enabled him to look back on the later flower of his earlier days, for it was written that he should plow and others reap. And of necessity it was so. Like the prospector who finds gold in the wilderness and straightway shoulders his pack to seek for further treasure, his unwearying soul drove him on in steadfast pursuit of that which lay just over the hill. It was not the thing that lay at his feet which fascinated,

CONCLUSION

but the promise of the morrow, whose dawn already gilded the horizon of his spirit.

Clark, with his impetuous energy, is typical of a country in which few achievements are impossible. He provided his own motive power and used his hypnotic influence only in one direction—that of progress. Ever faithful to his destiny, he was too busy to have time to suffer, too occupied to waste himself in regrets. Like the rapids themselves, his work moves on, and in its deep rumble may be distinguished the confused note of humanity, striving and ever striving.

(1)

THE END